

A STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE TO COOKING THE ULTIMATE PORK ROAST

# SAVEUR

*Savor a World of Authentic Cuisine*

**World's  
Tastiest  
Christmas  
Cookies**

PAGE 125

**THE LOST  
LETTERS OF  
JULIA CHILD**

PAGE 41

## The Perfect Holiday

41 fantastic recipes for elegant  
appetizers, classic roasts, decadent  
desserts, Swiss fondue, and more

NUMBER **134**  
DECEMBER 2010  
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# ENJOY FESTIVE CELEBRATIONS IN NORTH CAROLINA

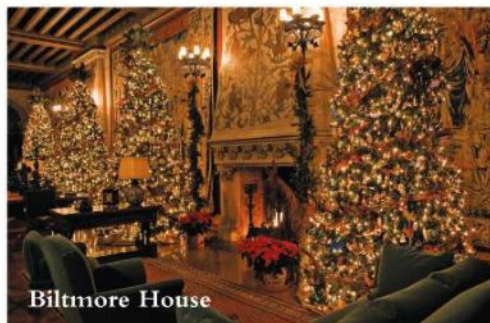
— this HOLIDAY SEASON



To help get you in the holiday spirit, SAVEUR recommends a trip to North Carolina, where festive events and entertaining shows are happening. Whether traveling with your family, friends, or a loved one, you'll find that North Carolina's full roster of activities will make your holidays memorable.

## CHOOSE AND CUT CHRISTMAS TREE SEASON

NC Mountains – To embark on a new family tradition, head into the **North Carolina mountains** and select your own Christmas tree. North Carolina produces more than 12 percent of the real Christmas trees in the United States. The North Carolina Fraser Fir has been judged the nation's best by the National Christmas Tree Association, and has been chosen for the White House eight times (more than any other species).



Biltmore House

## CHRISTMAS AT BILTMORE

November 5, 2010 – January 2, 2011

Asheville – For an enchanting evening with a loved one, stop by the **Biltmore House** and enjoy dazzling displays, lavishly decorated trees, bejeweled wreaths, and garlands of sparkling lights. America's largest home first opened to friends of its owners, the Vanderbilts, on Christmas Eve 1895. This 250-room French Renaissance château, surrounded by magnificent gardens and vineyards, remains America's largest privately owned home.



Wrightsville Beach

## NC HOLIDAY FLOTILLA

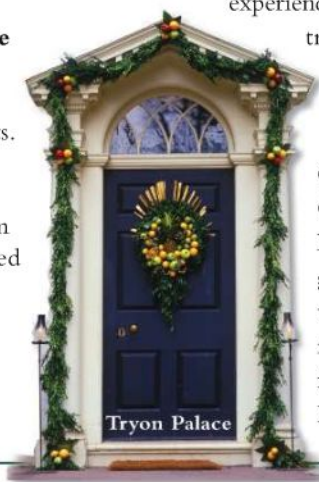
November 26-27, 2010

Wrightsville Beach – Attend an arts & crafts show, watch performing arts, and enjoy amusements from over 80 vendors at **Festival in the Park**. The night ends with a spectacular lighted parade featuring 30-50 illuminated boats and a captivating fireworks display to celebrate the 27th anniversary of this event.

## CHRISTMAS CANDLELIGHT & GRAND ILLUMINATION

December 18, 2010

New Bern – For a memorable and historical holiday experience, visit **Tryon Palace**. You'll be transported back to December 1770, when colonists celebrated King George III's birthday and the completion of North Carolina's first capitol building. Candle globes and fire baskets light the way to the Palace, where grand entertainment and a ball are underway. This magical evening is topped off with a spectacular fireworks show on the South Lawn.



Tryon Palace

## SAVEUR RECOMMENDS

**The Inn at Ragged Gardens** – this stone manor in Blowing Rock is a great place for a restful stay. It is filled with charming rooms and an acclaimed restaurant where you can enjoy a bottle of wine and locally raised roast duck.

**Old Europe Pâtisserie** – this downtown shop in Asheville offers a delicious cup of hot chocolate and dozens of traditional pastries prepared each day by Hungarian owner, Melinda Vetro.

**King's BBQ** – in Kinston. A visit here will satisfy your cravings and help finish your Christmas shopping! The King family runs a mail-order business shipping their hand-chopped pork and other authentic BBQ to fans across the country.

## EVENTS 11/5/10 - 1/2/11

|                                            |                    |
|--------------------------------------------|--------------------|
| 11/5/10 - 1/2/11.....                      | ASHEVILLE          |
| Christmas at Biltmore                      |                    |
| 11/15/10 - 1/2/11.....                     | ASHEVILLE          |
| National Gingerbread House Display         |                    |
| 11/20/10 - 1/2/11.....                     | CLEMMONS           |
| Tanglewood Festival of Lights              |                    |
| 11/26 - 11/27/10 ....                      | WRIGHTSVILLE BEACH |
| NC Holiday Flotilla                        |                    |
| 12/1 - 12/26/10 .....                      | MCADENVILLE        |
| McAdenville Christmas Town, USA            |                    |
| 12/18/10.....                              | NEW BERN           |
| Christmas Candlelight & Grand Illumination |                    |
| November - December.....                   | NC MOUNTAINS       |
| Choose and Cut Christmas Tree Season       |                    |

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# SAVEUR



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BY ROBERTA CORRADIN

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Cover *Decadent Trifle* PHOTOGRAPH BY TODD COLEMAN

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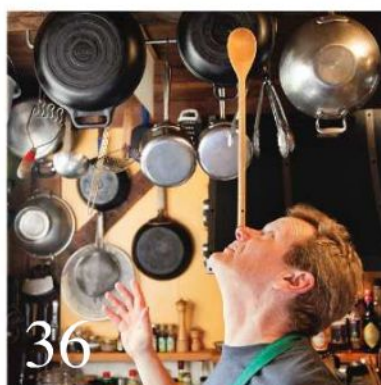
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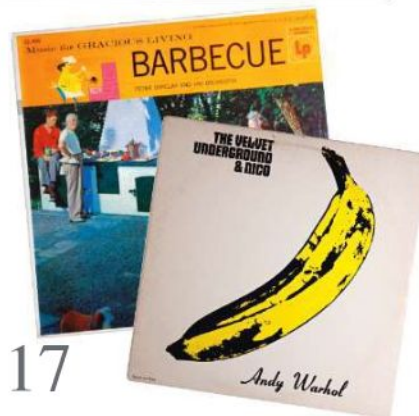
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PHOTOGRAPHER UNKNOWN  
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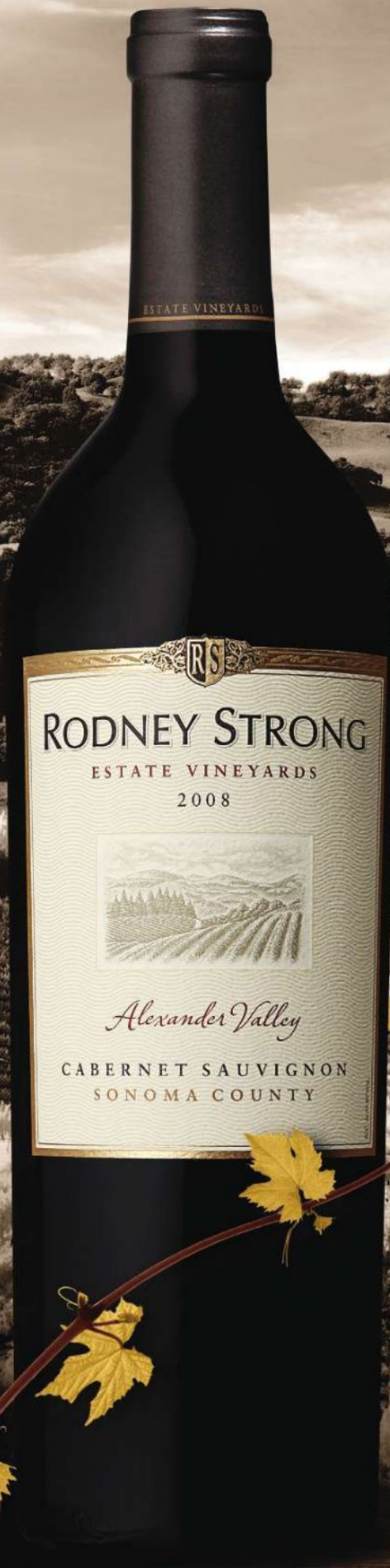
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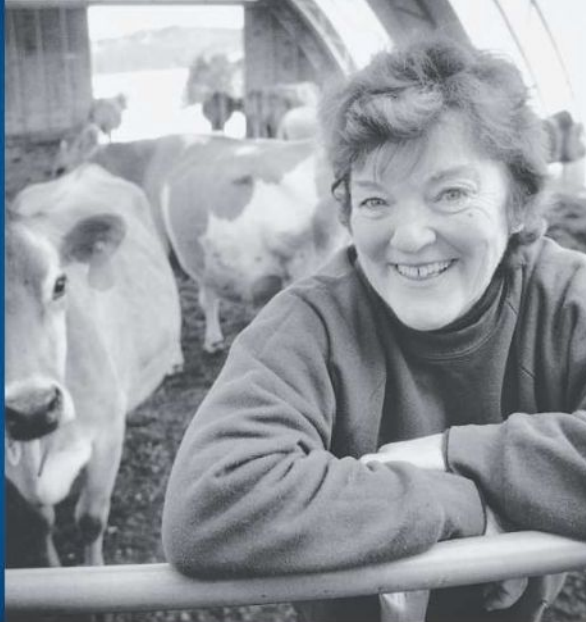
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Makes 12



### Ingredients:

|                                                            |                                                 |
|------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|
| 12 ASPARAGUS SPEARS                                        | 12 THIN SLICES<br>CABOT EXTRA<br>SHARP CHEDDAR  |
| 4 LARGE (14- BY<br>18-INCH) SHEETS PHYLLO<br>DOUGH, THAWED | 4 TABLESPOONS<br>CABOT SALTED<br>BUTTER, MELTED |
| 12 THIN SLICES PROSCIUTTO                                  |                                                 |

- 1 Preheat oven to 375 degrees. Have bowl of ice water on hand.
- 2 In pot of boiling, salted water, cook asparagus for one minute. Transfer to ice water with slotted spoon. Once cool, transfer to paper towels to drain; pat dry.
- 3 Lay first phyllo sheet on cutting board; brush entire surface with melted butter. Top with next phyllo sheet and brush with butter; repeat with remaining two sheets. Cut into 12 smaller rectangles.
- 4 Place one piece of prosciutto and cheddar on each rectangle. Place asparagus spears on top with tips extending beyond edges. Roll phyllo up around asparagus and brush with additional butter.
- 5 Place rolls on baking sheet and bake for 10 to 12 minutes, or until golden.

Serve warm.

Recipe courtesy of Chef Jeffrey Weiss

**NUTRITION ANALYSIS:** Calories 49,  
Total Fat 4g, Saturated Fat 3g, Sodium 85mg,  
Carbohydrates 0g, Dietary Fiber <1g,  
Protein 2g, Calcium 70mg

FOR MORE RECIPES, VISIT: [cabotcheese.coop](http://cabotcheese.coop)



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## FIRST

# My Deli, Myself

Life lessons were served with corned beef sandwiches on rye

**I** WAS RAISED IN a little place on the western border of Philadelphia. It had a blue-vinyl and wood-laminate décor, and there was always food on the table. I am not talking about my parents' house; I'm talking about our favorite booth—my grandmother's and mine—at City Line Deli, in Philly's Overbrook neighborhood. Our booth was the second from the door, from which my grandmother could watch other customers enter and I could gaze out the window. There, several times a week, she and I would eat our favorite foods: for me, a corned beef special, with coleslaw and Russian dressing, on rye; for her, chopped liver, and chicken soup with matzo balls the size of my fist.

My maternal grandmother, Sylvia Benson Kohn, was born in West Philadelphia in 1905. Her father, Nathan, a machinist at the U.S. Mint downtown, spent his early years in his native Kiev before immigrating to the States. Benson was a made-up name, given to him when he arrived. Her mother, née Kate Bogutz, came to America with her family from Kremenchuk, Ukraine, when she was an infant, around 1885. From her mother, Sylvia learned how to cook: tender brisket in a sweet-sour, tomatoey braise; cabbage rolled with a moist, beefy filling; crisp, golden latkes; chicken stewed whole, stuffed with rice and onions caramelized in schmaltz. She made biscotti-like, almond *mandel* bread and wafer-thin *mohn*, or poppy seed cookies. I looked forward to Purim each early spring, when my Grandma Syl would spoon her homemade apricot jam into hamantaschen, those pastry triangles we took to resemble the hat worn by the villainous Haman, the antagonist of the holiday story; hers were the most delicate and flakiest I'd ever tasted.

My grandmother—a longtime widow with a string of boyfriends, a penchant for politics, and a knack for canasta—was a terrific schmoozer, as well as a terrific cook; for her, one of the attractions of City Line Deli was the abundance of opportunities it provided for small talk, with the old guys slicing meat at the counter, with the young gals ferrying platters to tables, with the hugs-and-kisses owners,

cabbage; *knaidlach* for matzo balls; *pupik*, literally “belly button,” not quite the right term, but still what my grandmother called her favorite part of the chicken, the fatty tail.

In the suburbs where I grew up, plenty of kids went to Hebrew school and got bat or bar mitzvahed. I wasn't one of them. My father had been brought up Catholic; we celebrated Christmas and Easter. But we also shared spirited Passover seders with my grandma's extended family. I experienced my Jewishness through eating and talking. At home, my parents fought all the time; at the deli, my grandma and I fressed (ate) and kibitzed and fressed some more. So when I read David Sax's book, *Save the Deli* (Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2009), a paean to such places, I nearly cried. And when I read his story in this issue on the roots of American deli food in eastern Europe (see page 86), I gained something more: a sense of where all our kibitzing and cravings for certain foods had come from, before the painful transformations of the 19th and 20th centuries brought my great-grandparents to the States.

As she got older, my grandmother grew smaller. By the time she died, at 93 years old, she was a tiny, skinny thing. But like the garrulous ladies Sax met while reporting at the Bucharest Jewish Community Center, her appetite for a good conversation over good Jewish food remained undiminished. On Grandma Syl's penultimate birthday, my mother threw a brunch. Grandma stood before a deli platter and held the serving spoon aloft. “I love chopped liver,” she announced. “I'm gonna take it all.” And she did, her wizened face bouncing and dentures clicking with each soft bite. —BETSY ANDREWS, Senior Editor



Senior editor Betsy Andrews with her grandmother in 1966.

and with the other customers, almost all of whom she seemed to know. Like much of her generation of Jews, my Grandma Syl's Yiddish was impeccable. She never taught it to me, but I gleaned some words as she kibitzed at the deli, including the word *kibitz* itself. Mainly, I learned the terms for foods: *kasha varnishkes* for buckwheat groats cooked with bow tie noodles, one of my favorite dishes; *prakes* for stuffed



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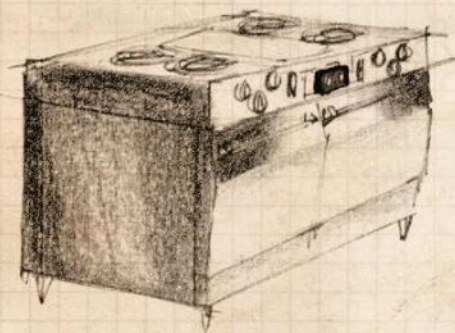




Before Fred Carl could invent the best range in its category, he first had to invent the category.

In 1980, Fred Carl had an idea: As a homebuilder in Greenwood, Mississippi, he'd always wanted to install professional-grade ranges in the homes he was designing and constructing.

His first instinct was to find something like his mother-in-law's 1949 Chambers range. But the Chambers model hadn't been produced since the 1950s.



So Fred called engineering departments at all the commercial range manufacturers to see if one made a range for the home. Unbelievably, not only were none of the companies making one, no one wanted to.

Fred had found a niche, and Viking was born. By the end of the decade, Viking was manufacturing the premier professional-grade range for the home.



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Pictured left: the original Viking range.



A Passion To Create.

[vikingrange.com](https://vikingrange.com)



# FARE

Facts and Finds from the World of Food, plus Agenda and More



## Noodle Love

A marriage is made over a steaming bowl of soup

**L**AO ZHENG WAS A GAMBLER and a crank. But at his popular hawker stall near Taipei's Yong Kang Park, he cooked bouncy noodles in a fragrant stock with beef so tender that it could be cut with chopsticks. It was there, in 1974, that my mother met the man she would marry five years later.

On that night, the lightbulb over Lao Zheng's stall had flickered out, and my father, who was waiting for noodles, offered to run down the street for a replacement. When he returned, his noodles were ready for him, on

the house. Noting that my mom had waited patiently in the dark while other customers had wandered off, Lao Zheng rewarded her, too, with a free bowl. The three strangers became friends.

My parents returned to the stall often. Then, one day, Lao Zheng disappeared. Some said he'd retired, others that he'd sold his stall to pay gambling debts. Eventually, my parents discovered that a couple by the last name of Luo had purchased his recipe. Today, the shop that they opened, called Yong Kang Beef

Noodle, is one of Taipei's most famous restaurants. The Luos were avid pupils of the old man's techniques. They'd learned how to introduce specific ingredients at different cooking intervals, to slice the shank into tender wedges against the grain, and, as Lao Zheng did, to keep the recipe a secret.

When I was young, we ate at the Luo's shop often. After we moved to the States, in the

Above, a bowl of Taiwanese beef noodle soup (see page 18 for a recipe).



early 1990s, my mom crafted her own soup, matching the flavors and textures she remembered as best she could. Now, when I make my own version, I think of the shop back in Taipei, the old man who started it all, and the love entangled in every bowl. —Amy Ma

## HONG SHAO NIU ROU MIAN

(Taiwanese Beef Noodle Soup)

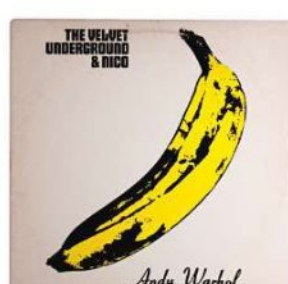
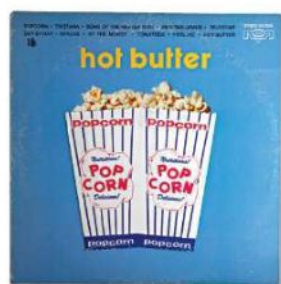
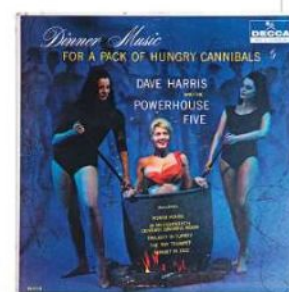
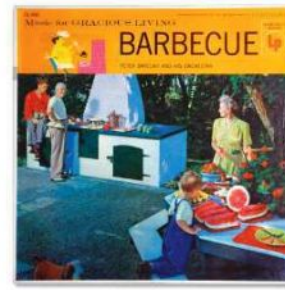
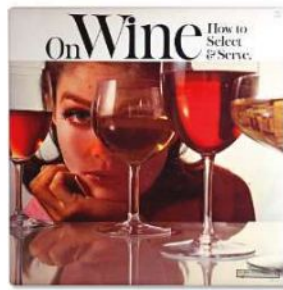
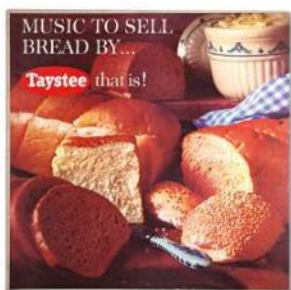
SERVES 10-12

The recipe for this soup (pictured on page 17) is based on one from Taipei's Yong Kang Beef Noodle shop. See page 134 for hard-to-find ingredients.

- 8 lbs. beef shanks, cut crosswise into 2"-thick, bone-in pieces
- 1/4 cup Chinese rice wine
- 3 tbsp. whole black peppercorns
- 14 cloves garlic, crushed
- 8 plum tomatoes, quartered
- 8 whole star anise pods
- 4 yellow onions, quartered
- 2 dried chiles de árbol
- 1 4" piece ginger, chopped
- 3 tbsp. Chinese black vinegar
- Dark soy sauce, kosher salt, and sugar, to taste
- 12 baby bok choy
- 1 1/2 lbs. thin egg noodles
- Chopped pickled Chinese greens, for serving

1 Put beef in a pot, cover with cold water; bring to a boil. Drain beef; transfer to a clean pot with wine, peppercorns, garlic, tomatoes, star anise, onions, chiles, and ginger. Add water to cover ingredients by 1 1/2"; bring to a boil. Reduce heat to medium; simmer for 1 hour. Remove from heat; let sit covered for 1 hour. Transfer beef to a cutting board. Skim fat; strain and reserve broth; discard solids. Add vinegar and season with soy sauce, salt, and sugar. Pull beef from bones; cut into large chunks and add to broth.

2 Bring a pot of salted water to a boil. Add bok choy; cook until just tender, about 2 minutes. Transfer bok choy to bowls. Boil noodles until softened; drain. Divide broth, beef, and noodles among bowls. Garnish with greens.



**Sounds Delicious** For nearly two decades, I've collected gastronomic vinyl—albums that play with food and drink themes in song, spoken-word, and cover imagery. I'm fascinated by what these midcentury artifacts tell us about the evolution of postwar American cuisine. International foods that we take for granted today needed demystifying 60 years ago: albums like *Chop Suey Polka* and *Bagels and Bongos* exploited new dining discoveries, and LPs had such mainstream reach in their 1950s-to-'70s heyday that advertisers—KFC, Taco Bell, Schweppes—flocked to promote their foods with jingles and easy-listening music on albums. How-to records flourished, too: PSAs on food safety, Vincent Price on wine. Columbia released a series of Music for Gracious Living LPs: the cover of *After the Dance* featured a dinner party amid an idealized depiction of the then-burgeoning suburbs, with recipes on the back for late-night dishes like the "beanwich" (burger buns filled with bacon, beans, catsup, celery, green onions, and horseradish). RCA Victor proffered food-focused LPs such as *Chile Con Cugie*, whose cover shows Spanish-American bandleader Xavier Cugat helping a buxom woman season a spicy dish while holding a chicken under one arm. Though the genre died out with the LP itself in the 1980s, there are lots of these records in thrift shops and on eBay today. One of my favorite finds is *Music to Sell Bread By*, which features a man who sounds a lot like Dean Martin literally singing the praises of Taystee bread: "Twenty-two slices of bread, a crust on either end, Taystee's the name of this bread, baked while you sleep, my friend." Every time I listen to it, I get hungry for a sandwich. —James Oliver Cury



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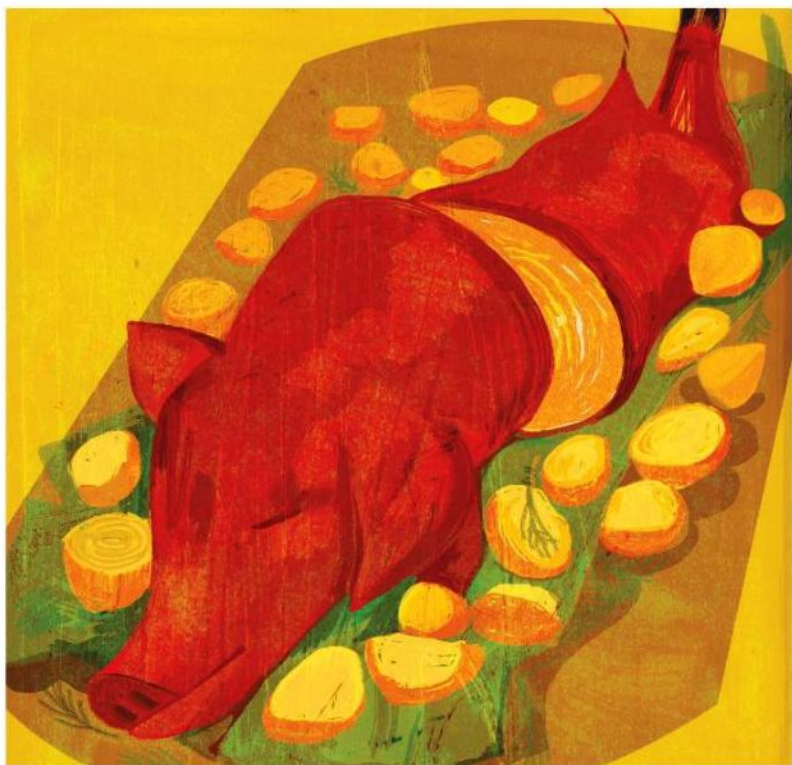
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## Whole Hog

A Cuban tradition takes hold in Florida

**I**N MIAMI, WHERE I grew up, my Italian-American clan was in the minority. Come Christmas Eve, when all of our Jewish neighbors ate Chinese, we cooked Italian seafood dishes. One year, my dad augmented our tradition with a delicacy from Miami's burgeoning Cuban community: he roasted a whole pig.

For Cubans, Christmas Eve brings a big feast: Nochebuena, which translates as "good night" but means something more like "holy night." Centuries ago in Spain and other Catholic countries, the meal consisted of seafood since it takes place during Advent, a time of penance and fasting. In Cuba, though, pigs were plentiful and religious strictures lax, so pork became the centerpiece.

My mom, who'd gleaned enough Spanish to sell real estate in the city's heavily Latino northwest, ordered a hog at the slaughterhouse

where thousands of suckling pigs are sold in the days leading up to Christmas Eve. This was in the early '70s, and though the recent wave of immigration had brought Cubans to Miami for more than a decade, they hadn't yet made it to my street. Neither had anything like the pink beast that Dad hauled home in his station wagon. We soaked it overnight in a tub of garlicky-orange *mojo* marinade.

My dad and brothers, as well as a Cuban friend (whose wife showed Mom how to make the side dishes—yuca; fried plantains; a dish of black beans and white rice called *moros y cristianos*, Moors and Christians) dug the pit and lit a bonfire. The hog was splayed over hot coals until fat dripped into the embers, producing firecracker-like pops. Its skin grew bronze; the air smelled like a campout. I filled my plate. The crackling skin snapped in my mouth, while the meat—succulent and sharp from the vinegary *mojo*—startled me with its bold flavor.

Today, whole pigs are sold at the local grocery store at this time of year. And even if I'm not hauling home a (continued on page 24)

## Agenda December

1

Anniversary:  
**DR PEPPER  
PATENTED**

1885, Waco, Texas

When Charles C. Alderton, a pharmacist at Morrison's Old Corner Drug Store in Waco, Texas, unveiled a concoction of carbonated water and sundry fruit syrups (said to promote "vim, vigor, and vitality"), patrons nicknamed it "Waco" after its birthplace. Possible namesakes for the soda's subsequent brand name range from a former employer of store owner Wade Morrison's to the disapproving father of the woman whom Morrison was courting.

3

**FEAST OF SAINT  
FRANCIS XAVIER**  
Goa, India

Thousands of pilgrims journey to southwest India to remember Saint Xavier, a canonized 16th-century Jesuit missionary whose remains are interred at the Basilica of Bom Jesus in Old Goa. Mass is followed by picnicking on foods like



*sannas* (steamed rice-and-coconut cakes spiked with toddy, or coconut liquor), chickpeas flavored with jaggery, *pulao* (chorizo, clam, or prawn pilafs), red and green chicken masalas, and sesame toffee and other sweetmeats. Information: india.gov.in/knowindia/bomjesus.php.

4

**EID AL-BARBARA  
(FEAST OF SAINT  
BARBARA)**

Lebanon, Syria, and  
Palestine

Christians throughout the

Arab world kick off the Christmas holiday season with a Halloween-like custom to honor Saint Barbara, a fourth-century martyr who is said to have donned disguises to elude Roman capture. *Qameh el-Barbara*, a dessert made of wheat berries, anise, cinnamon, pomegranate seeds, dried fruits, and nuts, is offered to children parading door to door in costume.

7

**PALM BEACH  
FOOD & WINE  
FESTIVAL**

Palm Beach, Florida

At this annual event, hungry snowbirds stroll the shopping plaza along the island's Worth Avenue, filling up on wine and local restaurant fare for a cause: the Peggy Adams Animal Rescue League. Chow down on bites both high and low, from the Four Seasons Resort's guava-braised short ribs to 10-ounce belly-busters from Grease Burger Bar. Then cheer on Sunshine State toques at the \$10,000 Chef Throw-down cooking competition. Information: palmbeachfoodandwinefestival.com.

10

**TERRA MADRE DAY**  
Worldwide

Started last year on the 20th anniversary of Slow Food, this annual global day of action honors the international organization's efforts to promote healthy, sustainable foods and local foodways. Supporters worldwide host communal meals, tastings, and other food-related events, the proceeds of which are intended to help fund the launching of a targeted 1,000 school, community, and city gardens in Africa. Information: slowfood.com.



24-25

Anniversary:  
**EGGNOG RIOT**  
1826, West Point,  
New York

On Christmas Eve, despite the school's forbiddance of alcohol consumption, a group of cadets at the U.S. Military Academy at West Point smuggled in liquor from local taverns to spike their eggnog. Among the flouters was the future Confederate president Jefferson Davis, though his straitlaced classmate and future general, Robert E. Lee (below),



declined to participate. When an officer attempted to break up the party, the budding soldiers took to battle, causing much damage to the barracks. Twelve cadets, not including Davis, were dismissed for their roles in the riot.

29

Birthday:  
**ROBERT C. BAKER**  
1921, Newark,  
New York

In the 1960s, Cornell University food scientist Robert C. Baker devised a way to keep bread-ing on reconstituted processed poultry while frying, and thus invented the chicken nugget. Other innovations he hatched include turkey ham, ground poultry, and poultry hot dogs, as well as Cornell chicken, an oil-and-vinegar-based barbecue preparation beloved in New York's Finger Lakes region.





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MEANINGFUL MEMORIES,  
GREAT GIFTS LAST LONG  
AFTER THE HOLIDAYS.

*Joyeux Noël and Happy Holidays*



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**Visual Feast** Jake Tilson is a British artist and graphic designer, a maker of paintings, collages, websites, books. He is also an adventurous cook. In his fabulous book *A Tale of 12 Kitchens* (Artisan, 2006), recipes come embedded in the stuff of real life, with snapshots and ephemera—a Metro ticket, the label from a pack of tortillas—overlapping on every page. We asked Tilson how he cel-

brates Christmas, and his response was the collage above, full of fragments from holidays past at his London home and his in-laws' in Scotland. Who else would invent a dish like Blizzard Duck, which Tilson plunges into a snowbank before roasting? Like all of Tilson's work, it's an experiment, a lark, and an invitation to engage with the world around us. —Beth Kracklauer



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(continued from page 20) whole beast on Christmas Eve, I at least cook a pork shoulder, slathered in the same citrusy marinade I fell in love with as a kid (see a recipe below). The meal may not be as dramatic, but the result is as satisfying as I remember that first whole hog to be. —Victoria Pesce Elliott



## PERNIL ASADO CON MOJO

(Mojo-Marinated Pork Shoulder Roast)

SERVES 10-12

- 1 7-9-lb. bone-in, skin-on pork shoulder
- 1 tbsp. dried oregano
- 1 tbsp. ground cumin
- 30 cloves garlic, chopped
- 2 cups fresh orange juice
- 2 cups fresh lime juice
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste

① Using a knife, score pork skin to make a diamond pattern. Purée oregano, cumin, garlic, and 2 tbsp. orange juice in a food processor. Rub purée over pork; season with salt and pepper; transfer to a bowl. Pour remaining orange and lime juices over pork; chill, covered, overnight.

② Remove pork from marinade (reserve marinade); season with salt and pepper. Heat oven to 325°. Put pork skin side up on a rack in a roasting pan; add 2 cups water. Cover pork with parchment and foil. Bake until a thermometer reads 180°, 4-5 hours. Remove foil; broil until crispy, 5-10 minutes. Pour pan juices into a saucepan and add marinade. Boil until sauce thickens, 10-15 minutes. Serve pork with sauce.

**History** Ancient Egyptians left fruit-and-nut cakes in graves, and Romans mixed raisins, pine nuts, pomegranate seeds, and honeyed wine into barley cakes called *satura* to feed soldiers. Starting in the 1400s, much-prized dried fruits and nuts were traded westward to England, where they were baked into cakes for special occasions—particularly Christmas.

**Fruit** Dyed red and green, glacé cherries and pineapple sweeten and moisten store-bought fruitcakes and lend them their holiday hues. For a less cloying cake, dried fruits—apricots, peaches, or, as in antiquity, figs and dates—are used. For boozier versions, fruits are first marinated in liquor.

**Nuts** In 18th-century Europe, fruitcake was eaten around the winter solstice to mark the annual nut harvest. Together, fruits and nuts—almonds, walnuts, pecans—account for upwards of 70 percent of a fruitcake's density.

**Aging** Rum, brandy, or another liquor is added to the batter or "fed" to the baked fruitcake over time



through holes in its underside or via a liquor-soaked cheesecloth wrapper. The alcohol preserves the cake, which lasts for months in the fridge; aging melds the cake's myriad flavors.

**Dark vs. Light** Dark fruitcakes include molasses

and brown sugar, black fruits like currants, and dark liquors. Often meant to be eaten before they've aged, light cakes (like the one shown) are made with granulated sugar or light corn syrup, and golden and yellow fruits, with or without light liquors.

**Spices** Anise and cumin seasoned the first fruitcakes. Allspice and cloves are more commonly used today, particularly in dark fruitcakes, while light cakes might take ginger and vanilla. Candied citrus peels add zing. —Paulina Anderson

**ONE GOOD BOTTLE** Desert-covered New Mexico may seem like the last place to grow grapes. But beneath its parched surface is mineral-laden soil, and cool nights in its mountains help the fruit develop acidity. Indeed, a history dating to the 1600s, when missions began producing sacramental wine, attests to New Mexico's suitability for winemaking. The late Gilbert Gruet was one vintner who understood as much. In 1983, 31 years after founding the champagne house Gruet et Fils in his native Bethon, France, Gruet visited the state, where the calcium carbonate-rich soil and dry climate impressed him. He snatched up land at a bargain price and, with his children, transformed a parcel of high countryside into a vineyard. One of his legacies is the Gruet Blanc de Blancs 2006 (\$25 for a 750-milliliter bottle). Made from 100 percent chardonnay grapes, this dry, velvety sparkler transitions from a nose of citrus and pear to a toasty yet crisp finish. It's a terrific, affordable holiday bubbly to pair with everything from fresh-shucked oysters to cheese. —Helen Hollyman





# REINVENT



**OBJECTIVE** | Flavors as great as the Lone Star State

**INVENTOR** | Chef Dean Fearing, Fearing's Restaurant, Ritz-Carlton Dallas

**REINVENTION** | Dublin Dr Pepper Braised Short Ribs with Queso Fresco Corn Whipped Potatoes and Caramelized Tobacco Onions

- 6 Large Idaho® Russet Potatoes
- 2 lbs Beef Short Ribs, cut 2" x 2"
- 4 C Dublin Dr Pepper
- 2 Ears Yellow Corn, shucked, kernels removed
- 3 oz San Pedro Cheese or Queso Fresco
- 1 Spanish Onion, peeled and julienned



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## 5 to Try

# Giving Gifts

Charities benefit from these holiday foods

## 1 Cookies for Kids' Cancer

([cookiesforkidscancer.org](http://cookiesforkidscancer.org)) From oatmeal raisin to chocolate almond coconut crunch, the all-natural gourmet cookies at this cyber bake sale raise money for pediatric cancer research. Seven varieties, including Liam's lemon sugar cookie, named for the boy who inspired the charity, are hand-baked to order; \$30 for a dozen.



mustard, flavored crackers, and an array of cheeses, including an almond-covered cheddar-and-blue cheese ball. With each package sold, a \$5 donation goes to Share Our Strength's childhood hunger campaign.

## 4 HimalaSalt (himalasalt.com)

This artisanal sea salt is sustainably hand-harvested from deep within the Himalayas. Essential minerals lend it a luminous pink hue and potent flavor. Five percent of the company's profits from sales of the salt, and from organic pink and green peppercorns (as shown in the gift box, left, \$48), goes to environmental causes such as the Wilderness Society and Oceans Alive.



## 2 Compartes Chocolatier

**African Truffles** ([compartes.com](http://compartes.com)) Caramelized plantain and cardamom coconut are among the five flavors infused in this truffle collection (\$20, shown below). Each organic chocolate comes emblazoned with a bright graphic of the African continent. Proceeds benefit Relief International's efforts in Darfur.

## 3 Hickory Farms Party

**Planner** ([hickoryfarms.com](http://hickoryfarms.com)) The 49-year-old specialty food purveyor's gift box (\$40) contains both turkey and beef Signature Summer Sausages,



## Eating Poetry Edited by Daniel Halpern

# CHRISTMAS IN AUGUST

Towns on the Northern California coast are foggy in August  
With shafts of startled sunlight sometimes in the afternoon.  
It's hard to know what season you are in, so, in the market  
This morning, idling past the sacks of corn flour with my cart,  
Maria's phrase came into my head. She makes a hundred tamales  
Every year for Christmas Eve and likes to talk, when I see her  
In town on a clear cold December day, about her schedule:  
The day she roasts the pork and boils the chicken, the day  
She spends simmering the *mole*—onions and garlic, of course,  
bay leaves and chiles, *guajillo* or chipotle for smokiness,  
and oregano—"how much?" you ask Maria and she shrugs,  
"Un poquito,"—and at this season, sticks of cinnamon,  
A little ground pumpkin seed, cumin, some chocolate—  
Her sister likes green olives—you simmer it for hours  
while you knead the masa with pork fat from the roast  
and the seasoned water you boiled the chicken in—  
and then Christmas Eve eve, when the children help you  
fashion the tamales in their *hojas*. That was the phrase  
I remembered in the market, the one about the young girls  
And their quick hands. It made me think of Christmas  
In the Berkeley hills and the old man's hands—a refugee  
Professor from another generation, he would seem chagrined  
When I saw him in the market, as if we had been caught  
In some unmanly compromise when we should be home  
Writing treatises on medieval Polish grammarians.  
But he loved preparing herring on Christmas Eve  
And I can visualize his old hands, not so quick,  
Slicing pieces of the fatty Baltic fish, assembling  
Juniper berries, the vinegar and peppercorns and olive oil,  
Bay leaves and cloves. There is, I'm sure, some Polish phrase  
for the right amount of mustard, meaning "just enough."  
At our house we peel chestnuts on Christmas Eve morning,  
My beloved in her apron browning onions and celery  
For the stuffing, her flowered apron all business,  
As if she were commandeering the ship of the world,  
Which in a way, on that day, she does. Outside  
It was August, the planet just turning toward the dark,  
A long way and not a long way from the short, dark days  
We gather to celebrate the light surviving through.

—Robert Hass





Whatever your Mood



**V**acqueyras  
Côtes du Rhône **Cru**



**Always Right**



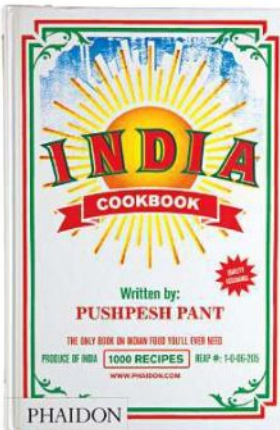
## Book Review

# Banquet of Books

A sampling of some of this year's favorites

**India Cookbook** *Pushpesh Pant* (Phaidon, 2010; \$49.95) I love Indian food. Really. I have hundreds of cookbooks on the subject. Do I cook from them all? Of course not. I pull them out in spurts, dipping into one after the next in search of the secret to a favorite dish. The trouble is that most Indian cookbooks are fairly inscrutable; they're whimsically arranged; they pair overcomplicated techniques with faint instructions, and they leave you guessing at what can be a confusing array of ingredients. *Kali sabut urad dal*, anyone? (That would be whole black gram beans.) To make matters worse, your average Indian cookbook (like the standard curry joint) covers only a small part of the cuisine of northwest India, specifically the state of Punjab, with a smattering of subcontinental favorites: a spicy vindaloo from Goa, a rendition of the Kashmiri lamb stew called *rogan josh*. My collection of Indian cookbooks amounts to my stab at comprehensive coverage; it's my cobbled-together encyclopedia.

So, my curiosity was piqued when a friend gave me a copy of *India Cookbook*, which the cover bills, incredibly, as "The Only Book on Indian Food You'll Ever Need." Indeed, New Delhi-based cookbook writer Pushpesh Pant spent two decades collecting and testing recipes for the volume. A quick look-through revealed that the recipes are authentic and



Sweet yogurt with saffron and pistachios

enticing, the photos (including 144 full-page recipe images) lush and gorgeous. Best of all, the recipes come from all over India: stir-fried cabbage with coconut from Kerala in the south as well as saffron-flavored *biryani* from Hyderabad in the central state of Andhra Pradesh, and samosas and other snack foods from West Bengal in the east; naan, *paratha*, and other breads from all over the subcontinent. I was pleased and surprised to find that one of my favorite sweets was included, a creamy, saffron-infused yogurt called *shrikhand* (pictured above; see a recipe at right), which hails from the western states of Maharashtra and Gujarat. Little known in the U.S., its thick texture is obtained by draining the yogurt in the refrigerator overnight, an easy and transformative technique.

While the book is chock-full of

recipes (more than 1,000 in all), it is short on tips and lessons; there are few step-by-step photos or in-depth guides. But, in a way, the recipes, written in clear, digestible language, speak for themselves—aided by an introduction on the cuisines of the major regions, and, in the back, a helpful glossary of ingredients. And the section on spice mixtures and pastes—their names, ingredients, and preparations—provides as thorough a schooling in the building blocks of the cuisine as most cooks will need. *India Cookbook*, above all, is an inspiration and a testament to the glory of Indian cooking in all its incarnations. It's a call to the kitchen.

—Todd Coleman

## SHRIKHAND

(Sweet Yogurt with Saffron and Pistachios)

SERVES 6

The recipe for this cool and creamy dessert (pictured above) is based on one in Pushpesh Pant's *India*

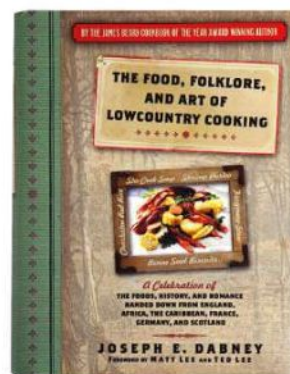
Cookbook (Phaidon, 2010).

- 6 cups yogurt
- 1 tsp. saffron threads
- 1 tbs. warm milk
- 1/2 cup superfine sugar
- 1/2 tsp. green cardamom seeds, crushed
- 10 pistachios, chopped

Cut 3 layers of cheesecloth into a 12" x 24" square. Put yogurt in middle of cheesecloth, bring up ends, and tie with kitchen twine. Tie cheesecloth-bound yogurt to the handle of a wooden spoon; set wooden spoon over a bowl. Chill yogurt and let drain overnight to a thicker consistency. Combine saffron and milk and let steep for 30 minutes. Put drained yogurt into a bowl; stir in saffron mixture and sugar. Divide *shrikhand* between 6 small bowls and garnish with cardamom and pistachios.

**The Food, Folklore, and Art of Lowcountry Cooking** *Joseph E. Dabney* (Cumberland House, 2010; \$29.99) To call Joseph Dabney a cookbook writer isn't exactly right. Sure, his previous book, *Smokehouse Ham, Spoonbread & Scuppernon Wine* (Cumberland House, 1999), is full of fantastic Appalachian recipes, but they're interwoven with vivid storytelling about local traditions and characters. The same goes for Dabney's latest book, *The Food, Folklore, and Art of Lowcountry Cooking*, whose braided strands of history, culture, and cooking offer a fine introduction to this unique subset of Southern food. The Lowcountry region,

which stretches 200 miles from Pawley's Island, South Carolina, down to Darien, Georgia, is a land apart. Dabney, a retired PR man with a penchant for collecting oral histories, details the influ-





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ences that shaped the area's cuisine: the French-inspired cooking in Charleston, Savannah, and Beaufort; the traditions of Gullah slaves who worked on the rice plantations and settled on remote barrier islands; the bounty of tidewater seafood that gave rise to beloved local dishes like shrimp and grits, frogmore stew, oyster roasts, she-crab soup, crab cakes, and more.

Chunky chapters are filled with revelations; in the one on barbecue, I learned that South Carolina's unique mustard sauce came from German colonial settlers; in the peanut chapter, I picked up a recipe for boiled peanuts in the slow cooker and learned that pinders, the local nickname for peanuts, derives from the Angolan word *mpinda*, and goobers, from the Central African word *nguba*. Dabney turned me on to recipes I've never seen before, like rice wine, which was commonly made in the area in the 1700s, and fried catfish with a crust of benne seeds (the local term for sesame seeds). Even if you're not interested in all the history, the book is a valuable recipe resource: there are three takes on chicken bog (an addictive, slow-cooked stew) and eight versions of purloo, a Lowcountry rice dish. From pimento cheese to cheese straws (see the recipe at right) to punch, all of the Southern party foods are represented.

On practically every page, there are Dabney's black-and-white shots of people and foods. There's commentary from food writers and historians—Matt Lee, Ted Lee, John Egerton, Nathalie Dupree—and from the region's great chefs, like Atlanta's Louis Osteen and Charleston's Robert Stehling. And there are excerpts from songs, poems, and hymns. It's this chorus of voices, as they celebrate the food and way of life of the Lowcountry, that makes Dabney's latest book such a pleasure. —Dana Bowen



Southern cheese straws

### CHEESE STRAWS

MAKES ABOUT 38

We based this recipe on one in Joseph E. Dabney's *The Food, Folklore, and Art of Lowcountry Cooking* (Cumberland House, 2010).

- 1 cup finely grated cheddar
- $\frac{3}{4}$  cup flour
- $\frac{1}{2}$  tsp. kosher salt
- $\frac{1}{4}$  tsp. sweet paprika
- $\frac{1}{8}$  tsp. cayenne pepper
- $\frac{1}{4}$  cup unsalted butter, chilled and cubed
- 1 egg, beaten

Heat oven to 400°. Combine cheddar, flour, salt, paprika, and cayenne in a medium bowl. Work butter into flour mixture until pea-size crumbles form; stir in egg to form a dough (add a few tsp. of water, if necessary). Halve dough and chill one half. Roll out the other half to  $\frac{1}{16}$ " thickness. Cut dough into 8" x  $\frac{1}{4}$ " strips; using your fingers, roll strips into thin straws. Transfer straws to a parchment paper-lined baking sheet and bake until crisp and lightly browned, 10–12 minutes. Repeat with second half of dough. Let cool before serving.

### Keys to Good Cooking: A Guide to Making the Best of Foods and Recipes

Harold McGee (2010, *The Penguin Press*; \$35) Half a dozen years ago, when I was first living in New York City and working as a line cook, I kept a copy of food-science writer Harold McGee's *On Food and Cooking* by my bedside. If I had a problem in the kitchen, with emulsifying aioli, for instance, or tenderizing meat, I turned to McGee once I got home to discover what had gone wrong and how to fix it the next time it came up. I considered that book—an authoritative, accessible compendium on the science of cooking—to be my friendly guide to the kitchen.

McGee's new book is even friendlier. A concise, Cliffs Notes-style volume with its table of contents right on the front jacket, *Keys to Good Cooking* calls

out quick advice in bulleted, readily digestible form. Organized by tools, methods, and ingredients, with key facts set in boldface type and instructions italicized in blue, it will help you shop for vegetables, select your knives, prep work surfaces, and handle foods safely. It will teach you the basics on every technique from foaming eggs to flipping crêpes, and the lessons will sink in deeper because you'll learn the simple science behind them. If you're unfamiliar with an ingredient—tefany beans, say, or *farro*—you can look it up in McGee. (As the book explains, the former are beans of the Southwestern U.S.—small, sweet, and quick-cooking—and the latter is emmer wheat, whose whole berries, abraded to better absorb liquids, are used to make risotto-like dishes.)

Turn to the book when you're working with a new recipe, and not only might it save you time and money, it can make you a better cook. While testing recipes for the November issue of *SAVEUR*, I read in its pages that the way to get a particularly crispy skin on a holiday bird is to air-dry it overnight on a rack in the refrigerator. I tried it, and the roast turkey

turned out great. Then I took the book home, where I flipped it open before heating a rickety gas grill on a chilly recent Sunday and read: "Place foil on top of grills and pans to superheat them by reflecting escaping heat back onto them." Such

advice might seem intuitive—a lot of good cooking is—but when you're as busy as most home cooks are nowadays, it helps to know that you can turn to McGee and be reminded of best practices. My rib eyes seared beautifully.

If *On Food and Cooking* was one for the reference library, the

### KEYS TO GOOD COOKING: A GUIDE TO MAKING THE BEST OF FOODS AND RECIPES HAROLD MCGEE

AUTHOR OF *ON FOOD AND COOKING*

KEYS TO GOOD COOKING: A GUIDE TO MAKING THE BEST OF FOODS AND RECIPES HAROLD MCGEE





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approachable *Keys to Good Cooking* should be kept beside your stove. As I've heard one cook say to another more than once when they've gotten into a bind on the line, "Go ask McGee." —*Hunter Lewis*

**One Big Table** *Molly O'Neill* (Simon & Schuster, 2010; \$50) If you could choose one dish, one recipe that defines you, what would it be? That's the question author and cookbook writer Molly O'Neill poses to America in her latest book. "[American] cooks had been forgotten over the past several decades as 'cooking' morphed into 'cuisine,'" writes O'Neill. *One Big Table* is her textured, joyous—and mouth-watering—rebuttal to the claim that Americans don't cook.

The author spent ten years and travelled more than 300,000

miles scouting the 800 recipes that were selected for this epic volume. The result is a profound reflection of America's delicious diversity, divided into ten recipe-crammed chapters peppered with archival images, along with profiles and occasional photos of the people (including many chefs, like Nancy Silverton and Floyd Cardoz) who contributed recipes to the book: Louise Etoch, a home cook in Arkansas who stuffs Lebanese grape leaves with lamb and mint; an Italian-Swiss woman in St. Louis, Missouri, who crafts toasted ravioli; a Mexican woman living in Ann Arbor, Michigan, who makes her own pineapple-tomatillo salsa.

Along the way, O'Neill finds

time to examine the everyday foods—cream cheese, baby carrots, chocolate cake—that define the way the country eats. But her contributors themselves reveal the most about life and cuisine



in America. Norma Naranjo of Ohkay Owingeh, a Native American reservation in New Mexico, uses seeds that have been passed down through generations of her Pueblo tribe to grow vegetables, which she stuffs

into her tamales. "The history of our people," she says, "is in those seeds." Angela Warnick Buchdahl of Tacoma, Washington—the first Asian-American woman to be ordained a rabbi—makes brisket in a *bulgogi* marinade. A recipe for chicken *persillade* from

Austin Leslie, a victim of Hurricane Katrina, is being published posthumously.

O'Neill's language is something to savor. Lobster rolls are "as unembellished as a Down Easter's speech." A clam fritter "felt like a small cumulus cloud in the hand and tasted like early morning water." Each recipe—its title including the name of the cook who provided it—is clearly written yet folksy and idiosyncratic; when I cook from the book, I feel as though I'm getting to know the person behind the dish, whether it's Ruth Eichner of Middlebury, Vermont, who prefers to use frozen berries in her pies, or Michael Mulligan of Ocala, Florida, who believes he's finally perfected the all-butter (no shortening) crust. (He freezes the butter for up to an hour. It works.)

"Michael Mulligan's All-Butter

*Coffee Bean* was searching for a natural soul mate, when he found three. What a conundrum.





Pie Crust.” “Ruth Eichner’s Frozen Raspberry Pie.” Barbecued clams. Vietnamese shrimp pancakes. Avocado soup. Like me, you’ll want to make them all.  
—*Gabriella Gershenson*

### High on the Hog: A Culinary Journey from Africa to America

*Jessica B. Harris (Bloomsbury, 2011; \$25)* Anyone interested in food history will find plenty to savor in Jessica B. Harris’s latest book. In it, Harris, a culinary historian and *SAVEUR* contributing editor, offers a thoroughly researched chronicle of food in the lives of black people in America, from the slaves whose arrival predated the nation to today’s celebrity chefs.

The centrality of sheer economics to African-American cuisine in the period of slavery is gripping. Foods native

to Africa—watermelon, okra, black-eyed peas—were stewed on ships crossing the Atlantic simply because slavers sought to protect their investment: their chattel refused to eat unfamiliar European foods. Harris shows how dishes rooted in African traditions, like rice bread, stewed eggplant, and groundnut (peanut) soup, came, via Big House cooks, to take a regular place at the white Southern table.

But she also refutes the canard that African-Americans were ill suited to cook anything else; more than a few 19th-century black caterers achieved renown and wealth (and created jobs for other blacks) by serving European-style specialties like filet of beef with snails, char-

lotte russe, and champagne jelly.

As emancipation took hold in the North in the early 1800s, many freedmen found success hawking street foods or cooking in taverns. Black cooks also followed opportunities farther afield, cooking buffalo steaks and sourdough biscuits in cowboy chuck wagons, or Dungeness crab and fresh-caught trout in Pullman railroad dining cars. In the early 20th century, as 1.5 million African-

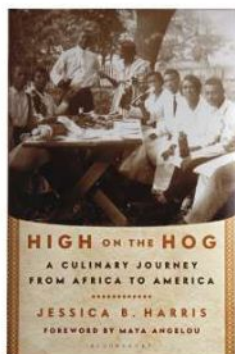
Americans migrated from the South to the Northeast, Midwest, and West, formerly regional dishes spread nationwide. The popular embrace of soul food in the 1960s recurred in the mid-’90s, when acclaim for chefs like Edna Lewis and Leah Chase

brought their dishes to a wider audience—a trend that, Harris notes, continues to this day, as Marcus Samuelsson readies the Red Rooster, his new restaurant in Harlem, with a menu featuring traditional Southern black fare.

Most of the book’s 23 recipes are reprinted from Harris’s previous cookbooks. Among those from archival sources is a dainty dessert called Snow Eggs. One of just two known recipes credited to James Hemings, the enslaved chef whose French culinary training was sponsored by Thomas Jefferson, it evokes the complex transit by which the tastes of Africa have become part of America’s heritage.

—*Dorothy Irwin*

THE PANTRY, page 134: Information on visiting Yong Kang Beef Noodle shop and on purchasing the Gruet Blanc de Blancs.



TODD COLEMAN (2)

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# SOURCE

## Regal Roe

This Italian farmed caviar reigns supreme

BY GABRIELLA GERSHENSON

**O**F ALL THE STARTERS that kicked off my Russian Jewish family's most festive meals, I would always reach for the hard-boiled egg whites filled with red caviar. The treat primed my palate for all types of fish roe. I remember the first time I tasted true caviar (the term for salted sturgeon eggs), an inky constellation on a cracker. That mouthful embodied everything I liked about salmon roe, intensified: the beads were more pungent; they imparted astounding flavor for their tiny size.

The world of caviar has changed dramatically since I was a child. Overfishing, pollution, and poaching have contributed to the severe depletion of beluga, osetra, and sevruga sturgeons from the Caspian Sea, the source of 90 percent of the world's caviar that borders Russia, Iran, and several former Soviet republics. The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) banned the trade of Caspian caviar in 2006 to protect the fish. Though the ban has since been relaxed, Caspian sturgeon are still very much at risk. Where does that leave lovers of true caviar? The answer, it seems, is with aquaculture. Today, reputable vendors of caviar primarily sell farmed varieties. I've tried several—from China, Israel, and the U.S., among other locales—but my favorite is Calvisius Caviar from Italy.

Calvisano, a small town between Venice and Milan, is home to Agroittica Lombarda, the most prolific caviar farm in the world, producing more than 20 tons of eggs each year under the Calvisius brand. Perhaps Calvisius has an edge because of experience: the farm (originally in collaboration with the University of California at Davis) has been raising white sturgeon, a Pacific species valued for its pale flesh and dark, briny roe, since the 1980s, and it produced its first batch of white sturgeon caviar in 1996. (The firm also raises osetra sturgeon and is developing beluga caviar.) Or perhaps it's the conditions: unlike some farms that continually recycle the same water through their fish tanks, Agroittica Lombarda treats its sturgeon to a constant supply of fresh groundwater. The pristine environs are reflected in the flavor of the roe, which is delicious. The white sturgeon eggs are buttery and mild, followed by a clean salinity. Meanwhile, the more complex osetra caviar (pictured at left) reveals rich flavors of walnut and banana. Experts advise that caviar of this quality should be enjoyed unadorned. Yet, I can't help but crave it in an egg-white nest, just as I ate it when I was a kid. An ounce of Calvisius white sturgeon caviar costs \$61, and an ounce of osetra costs \$89, plus shipping. Visit [www.calvisiuscaviar.com](http://www.calvisiuscaviar.com).

MICHAEL KRAUS





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## KITCHENWISE

# Balancing Act

In the kitchen with high-wire artist Philippe Petit

BY REBECCA SALETAN PHOTOGRAPHS BY LANDON NORDEMAN

**O**F COURSE HIGH-WIRE walker Philippe Petit would christen his home Cable House. In 1974, at the age of 24, Petit famously (and illegally) walked a tightrope stretched between the twin towers of the World Trade Center, a heart-stopping 1,350 feet above the ground. Petit, now 61, still stages tightrope walks, and his trade is very much in evidence at his home in the Catskills. To the left of the front porch, suspended several feet off the ground, there is the galvanized-steel cable, just under an inch in diameter, on which Petit practices daily. Nearby is the small barn where there's another wire (for tightrope walking in bad weather) and a small stage where he practices juggling for the street performances, lectures, teaching gigs, and high-wire performances that take him all over world. But it's in a room directly inside the front door of the main house that Petit performs some of his most daring feats: the kitchen.

A 170-square-foot boxy room with bright yellow walls, the kitchen bears the imprimatur of both Petit and Kathy O'Donnell, his partner in work and life (and the occasional crime for art's sake). The two bought the house in 1992, at first as a getaway from life in New York City. Constructed by the previous owners from parts of a barn that once stood elsewhere on the property, the house has an improvised feeling that's just right for this couple.

Over the years, Petit and O'Donnell began to spend more time at Cable House, gradually making it their primary residence. They continued to transform the space with a resourcefulness and a knack for living splendidly on very little that has served them well ever since Petit's pass-the-hat days back in Paris in the late 1960s. In the kitchen, they

REBECCA SALETAN is the editorial director of Riverhead Books. This is her first article for SAVEUR.



Philippe Petit getting ready to cook in his kitchen in upstate New York.





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replaced the décor they'd inherited with a mix of elements found on the property, collected on their travels, and given to them by friends. The cabinets are covered with the thick industrial yellow paint used to lay down stripes on asphalt roads—a contribution from sculptor John Kahn, who also nabbed the couple the square of granite, a tile store sample, that's set into the center island. Petit and O'Donnell tore out the old pink melamine countertops and replaced them with white Carrara marble donated by the Reverend James Parks Morton, dean emeritus of the Cathedral of St. John the Divine, where Petit has been an artist-in-residence since 1982.

Everywhere, too, are signs of Petit's genius for on-the-fly engineering. The stove, a 1953 propane-fueled Magic Chef, has chronic problems: the V-shaped inserts that regulate the flow of gas to the burners keep breaking, so Petit fashions new ones out of scrap metal; an old film canister functions as a case for a nutmeg grater; on a shelf, there's a homemade eggbeater that Petit devised, in which a wooden fork rotated by a leather cord agitates the contents of a glass.

But it's when Petit cooks that his artistry makes itself most fully felt in the kitchen. Although Petit has always loved to eat, for most of his life he had no idea how to cook. A few years ago, wanting to honor O'Donnell, who has cooked for both of them for decades, Petit decided to learn. "I love the challenge," he says. Once a week, as his schedule allows, Petit prepares an elaborate themed dinner. One evening, he cooks a meal from Chantrelle, a favorite (though recently shuttered) New York City restaurant. After selecting recipes (deviled quail eggs with caviar, pork chops, and slow-roasted pears), he transposes each into rebuslike notes in which he diagrams each step of the meal, calculating sequence and timing with obsessive precision. As he works, he refers often to his notebook, where meticulously annotated sketches help him make the distinction between, say, flat-leaf parsley and cilantro. "I apply my nature as a wire walker," he says. "Every detail is important." Even so, something usually goes slightly awry—the crotchety stove doesn't behave quite as intended, or the recipe instructions were too vague or confusing. "I like to complain that there is no cookbook that tells you exactly what to do," Petit says. "But actually, in the end, the teacher who tells you exactly how to put your foot on the wire is a bad teacher. You have to figure it out for yourself." 🐦







The kitchen has been designed to make the most of limited space.

① The 19th-century **beams** crossing the ceiling serve as racks from which Petit and O'Donnell hang pots, pans, and various other implements. These,



plus the ② **open shelving** for pantry items, allow for improvisational cooking. The design has evolved to accommodate found objects: in one corner, ③ **two halves of a hickory limb** cut from a tree that stood in the



backyard hold utensils like ladles and peelers. Gifts from friends distinguish the space:

④ the **white Carrara marble** donated by Reverend James Parks Morton; ⑤ a **granite tile** from sculptor John Kahn. ⑥ The **original stove**, a 1953 Magic Chef. Above, the **home-made eggbeater** and a detail from **Petit's notebook**. Below, Petit walking between the twin towers in 1974.





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## LIVES

# Making of a Masterpiece

How one of the world's great cookbooks came to be

**A**VIS DeVOTO MAY FINALLY BE GETTING the credit she deserves. Without her, *Mastering the Art of French Cooking* (Alfred A. Knopf, 1961), the groundbreaking cookbook by Julia Child, Simone Beck, and Louisette Bertholle, might never have made it to press. DeVoto's friendship with Julia Child began with a letter from Child to DeVoto's husband, the author Bernard DeVoto, regarding an essay he'd published on kitchen knives. When DeVoto responded on her husband's behalf, Child recognized a fellow *gourmande* and sent back a chapter she was working on; DeVoto immediately saw its potential and began reaching out to contacts in the publishing world. This month, Houghton Mifflin is releasing the decades' worth of correspondence that followed, in *As Always, Julia*, edited by Joan Reardon. It's a testament to the fortitude that went into creating a classic. —*The Editors*

FEBRUARY 12, 1953

Our first day in Marseille [where Child and her husband, Paul, a diplomat, had just moved from Paris]... It is a wonderful city, so gay and noisy, and everybody shouting in that wonderful accent.... Paul is now out with the men, being introduced around. Evidently Marseille is a place where women are seen but not heard, and stick close to home... a conception which neither of us approves, but which, in this instance, will be very useful.... I'll probably have much more time to work [on the book] than I did in Paris.... I have still a lot of personal experiments to do on yeast breads.... Then there is further research in the Waring mixer and electric egg beater.... [This] whole field is wide open, that of using the electric aids for a lot of



fancy French stuff...and we'll be presenting something entirely new. No sacred cows for us. In this connection, we had dinner the other night with [French food critic Maurice] Curnonsky,

who is 80, and... was a dogmatic meatball.... They were talking about Beurre Blanc, and how it was a mystery, and only a few people could do it, and how it could only be made

with white shallots from Lorraine and over a *wood* fire. Phoo. But that is so damned typical, making a damned mystery out of perfectly simple things just to puff themselves up. I didn't say anything as, being a foreigner, I don't know anything anyway. This dogmatism in France is enraging (that is really about my only criticism, otherwise I adore them). —*Julia Child*

FEBRUARY 27, 1953

I will take an hour off and arrange all your correspondence according to date.... It will all come in handy when the [manuscript] is completed. Terribly pleased that you are already pondering on several other cookbooks. You've got yourself a career, my girl....

I have now got Beurre Blanc licked to a frazzle, and I am getting bilious. Also have put on five pounds which on a figure like mine ain't good.... I have made your top secret mayonnaise with great success in spite of the fact that both my electric beaters broke down and I had to shift to the whisk. It's delicate



MARCH 20, 1953

I made a beautiful omelet for my lunch, with chives and parsley, but I still have to use a spatula to make it roll.... Honest to God, Julia, you have brought a revolution into this household. I wholly expect the completed book to cause a real revolution. —*A.D.V.*



Top to bottom: DeVoto and Child in Paris, 1955; the letter Child sent to Bernard DeVoto in 1952; DeVoto wrote that she couldn't get "real French bread" where she lived.



and lovely and I am pleased. But I do so hate to diet. Blast you.  
—Avis DeVoto

APRIL 24, 1953

There is so much that has been written, by people so much more professional than I, that I wonder what in the hell I am presuming to do, anyway. To think of these people who have been in the business since they were 10 years old. I keep having to bear in mind that what we are trying to do is to interpret the professional manner for the home cook, and that we are not trying to be an encyclopedia. My, there is so much to know; and I keep bumping into things, such as what are, really, the good cuts to use as stewing beef...and I don't personally know, and it is no good just taking hearsay out of a book. Well, I can see these self doubts and humble questionings will continue through to the end. I am physically incapable of bluffing, which is a terrible handicap, either in political or gastronomical conversation. Suddenly, wanting to make a strong point, I realize, "Do I really and absolutely know that fact?" —J.C.

SEPTEMBER 30, 1953

I read the soup chapter immediately, telephoned Dorothy [de Santillana, an editor at Houghton Mifflin who'd expressed interest in publishing the book]...and found she'd just finished reading it. We're

both extremely pleased... D. and I think the quick country soups sound ghastly. All I can think of is the kind of gruel that was fed to me when I was sick as a child. Are these actually good? Everything else sounds so delicious and I simply can't imagine Americans making these things with browned flour and so on. We both think the garlic soups sound marvelous and we are going to try them. You've done a swell job of describing them—they sound perfectly possible for anyone and absolutely mouth-watering. —A.D.V.



FEBRUARY 20, 1956

Our two duck splurges went off very well.... The braised duck was extremely good. I did a very high-class braise, following a recipe of Simca's [Simone Beck, coauthor of *Mastering the Art of French Cooking*].... The simpler braise consists merely of browning your vegetables and carcass bones in the braising pan, adding and browning the flour, then adding the stock, wine and duck; so duck and sauce cook at the same time. Makes a good sauce, but it hasn't quite the quality of the great braise. I am certainly coming more and more to the conclusion that this book, we should frankly state, is for people who like to cook; and who want to be able to produce the most delicious things it is possible to do. There are plenty of simple things, like a plain roast duck; but when you want a great effect, you can't kid yourself with half measures, as you won't get a superb result. —J.C.

FEBRUARY 27, 1954

I very nearly sent you a cable.... Just to say how absolutely wonderful I think the egg chapter is.... I am absolutely overwhelmed by the amount of work you have all put into this. Swept off my feet. Knew before how good the book would be but never felt it quite this way before. Masterly. Calm, collected, completely basic, and as exciting as a novel to read. This can't just be my own reaction, because I'm nuts about food—I think many, many people will feel the same way. —A.D.V.

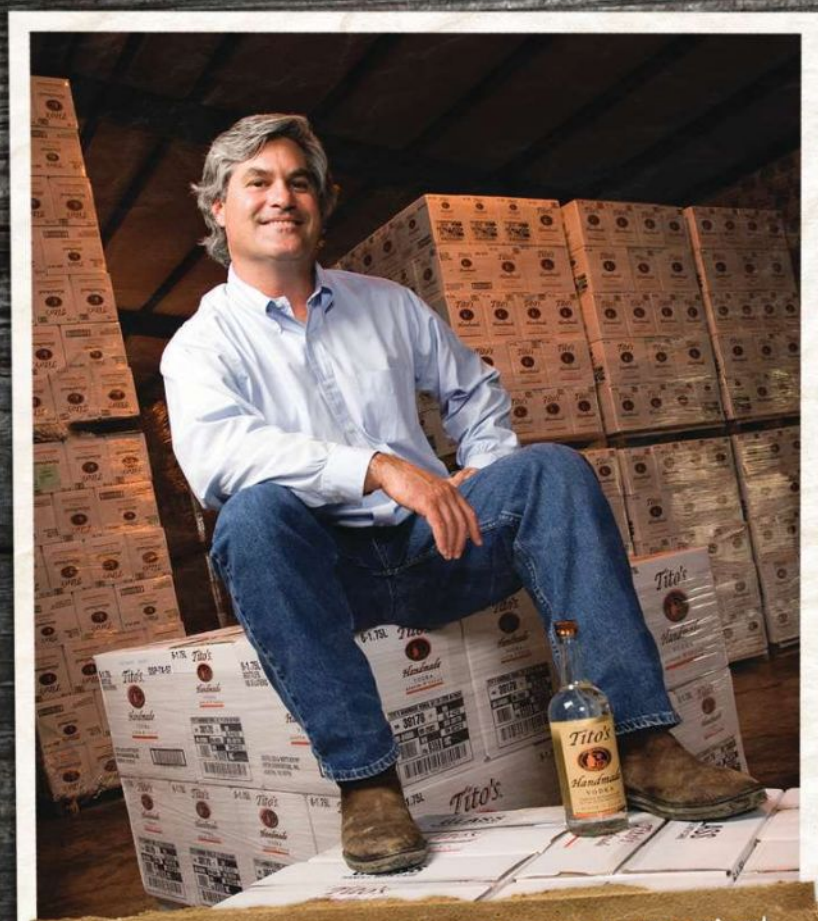
Clockwise from top: Child at Le Cordon Bleu in 1950 with chef Max Bugnard; DeVoto and Child in Rouen, France, in 1954; in a letter praising the produce available in France, Child described French strawberries as "dreamberries"; DeVoto's first letter to Child, sent in 1952; Child making bread on a visit to Maine in 1953.

JANUARY 12, 1958

[As] I keep saying, the whole point of our recipes is in their detail.... [My] teaching experience confirms me more than ever in the conclusion that most Americans don't know anything at all, NOTHING, about the techniques of good cooking and that every detail (EVERY ONE) must be thoroughly explained. So I am deeply depressed, gnawed by doubts, and



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feel that all our work may just lay a big rotten egg. —J.C.

**MARCH 25, 1958**

If *only* you or I were a really good writer! Because what is needed, I keep thinking, is a carefully graduated series of articles...breaking the news of a new concept of cooking. Easy steps for little feet. Don't frighten them off. Perhaps even a first book like that—not too big, not too long, authentic French recipes but the easier and quicker ones.... I think a book like this would probably lead cooks on to want more and to overcome their fears. —A.D.V.

**NOVEMBER 1959**

Black news on the cookbook front [from Houghton Mifflin]... The answer is NO, Neg, Non, Nein...too expensive to print, no prospects of a mass audience. Too bad. If it had been one of those quick books which tell few details, they probably would have taken it: "COQ AU VIN. Take cut up broilers and brown them in butter with onions, bacon, and mushrooms. Cover with red wine and bake for 2 hours."... We must accept the fact that this may well be a book unacceptable to any publisher, as it requires work on the part of the reader. —J.C.

**APRIL 9, 1960**

Briefly, situation is about the same, but Bill [Koshland, vice president at Alfred A. Knopf] is beginning to move, and when he does

he will probably move fast. We must be patient. But we can be quite hopeful. I had about a half hour's meeting with Bill, [editor] Judith Jones, [editor] Angus Cameron (all of whom have cooked with the book)... Most enthusiastic talk... about the quality of the book, and its complete uniqueness.... Talked longest to Judith, who has done most cooking from the book. She is a complete con-

amounts—that is, this serves four, or six, are too small for American habits of eating... I feel very, very encouraged, and you can fan your small coal of hope a bit. —A.D.V.

**MAY 3, 1960**

Well, you did it—did it—remarkable girl. Seems very hard to believe, and shall feel it is really true when that contract comes [from Knopf].... Well, is all I can say. Now what. From all I have heard, the dog work now really begins.... [The] fact that they are really enthusiastic is wonderful. Well again. It is certainly going

to be some problem to build us up. Only Louisette is fairly photogenic, and no one has ever wanted to publish any of our recipes in anything. (Wonder if they know that?)... Had a most typically French response to my Cassoulet research from dear Simca [Simone Beck]—I honestly wonder how anything scientific comes out of *la Belle France*, as this is so typical. None of my sources (which include the most reputable) are even considered. The true story is this which comes from some friends of her parents who live near Toulouse, that nothing is a Cassoulet which does not contain preserved goose, and that Toulouse was the originator of the Cassoulet. Etc. *Eh bien*. —J.C.

**MAY 2, 1961**

Well am quite sure it will all come out in the wash, the book will appear, in better shape than you think.... No relationship is flawless. And a relationship like yours with Simca is in many aspects like a marriage. Very good ups and very bad downs. But [it] has been a working relationship on the whole, good and productive. And the child you have produced is going to have flaws too, but will be on the whole, good. —A.D.V.

*From As Always, Julia: The Letters of Julia Child and Avis DeVoto, edited by Joan Reardon. Copyright © 2010 by Joan Reardon. Reprinted by permission of Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Publishing Company. All rights reserved.*



**Clockwise from top left: Julia Child and a television crew filming an episode of *The French Chef* at WGBH in Boston in 1963; shallots, which Child and her coauthors feared American cooks might not be able to find in supermarkets at that time; the finished book, published by Alfred A. Knopf in October 1961.**

**SEPTEMBER 1961**

I must say I think this book of ours is MARVELOUS. It tells so much, and has so many wonderful recipes. I am struck all over again by what a remarkable book I think it is.... My, I do hope others will feel the same way we do about it.... The timing is perfect, and we couldn't be in a better place—and we are now not UNKNOWN WRITERS. —J.C.



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## REPORTER

# The Tomato Trials

Does a delicious winter tomato have to be an oxymoron?

BY BARRY ESTABROOK

**L**IKE OTHER HOME COOKS, I consume lots of delicious tomatoes. Every year, though, when the farmers' markets run out and frost has blackened the vines in my garden, I turn to the supermarket, where I resign myself to perfectly round, perfectly red—and perfectly tasteless—specimens. I'm not alone. According to figures compiled by the United

the bottom in rankings of consumer satisfaction. Is there hope, I've wondered, for a decent tomato in winter?

Seeking answers, I found myself one morning last December sequestered in the sensory testing lab of the University of Florida's Department of Food Science and Human Nutrition. A sliding door opened in a plain white wall,

and a pair of hands in surgical gloves pushed through a plate containing a cherry tomato. I tasted. It lacked the acidic balance of a truly great tomato. I gave it a score of 60 from a range of -100 to 100 on the keyboard in front of me and waited for another offering. In all, I chewed through six varieties of tomatoes: Red Pear, Cherry Roma, Ailsa Craig, Matt's Wild Cherry, Tommy Toe heirlooms, and, as a control, a Cherry Berry hybrid bought at a local Wal-Mart.

I was taking part in a research effort that has drawn together psychologists, food scientists, statisticians, and molecular biologists on a

ments in the flavors of industrial tomatoes."

Klee, 57, who zips around campus in a non-professorial two-seater BMW convertible, has brought the same unorthodox approach to the tomato project. Instead of working on the types of tomato that have dominated the market—ones favored by growers and shippers, who want toughness, disease resistance, and bulk—Klee turned to consumers, who are crying out for decent-tasting fruit. "One goal is to define what a flavorful tomato is, and the other is to find the plant genes that control the process and get them back into the tomato," Klee told me. He allows that the process would be quicker and simpler if he were to use genetic modification—simply taking the desirable genes from a tasty tomato and splicing them into the DNA of an industrial fruit. But because consumers are wary of genetically modified plants, Klee has chosen to go the slow route. Unlike other food scientists, Klee's team uses traditional breeding techniques, cross-pollinating plants and sorting through thousands of their offspring, hoping to find one that has the traits he seeks.

"In the past forty years, the yields of tomato plants have gone up threefold," said Klee, "outpacing the plant's ability to keep up filling the fruit with flavor. You've basically diluted out all of the good traits." The genes that once gave commercial tomatoes taste have become lost. To rediscover them, tasting panels such as the one I joined are working their way through 150 varieties of nonhybrid, heirloom tomatoes, survivors from a time when taste mattered to growers.

Identifying what makes a tasty tomato is anything but straightforward. Contrary to popular notions, Klee said, not all heirlooms taste good.



Some of the heirloom varieties used in Dr. Harry Klee's research.

States Department of Agriculture, Americans bought \$5 billion worth of commercially grown fresh tomatoes in 2009, and during the winter months about 90 percent of those come from vast industrial farms in Florida. We may buy them, but that doesn't mean we like them. In survey after survey, fresh tomatoes fall at or near

quest for what is now a contradiction in terms: a good-tasting, commercially grown tomato no matter what the season. "It is a very achievable goal," said Dr. Harry Klee, a professor in the Horticultural Sciences Department, who coordinates the group. "I'll predict that within five to ten years, you'll see significant improve-

**Good Chemicals** *Beta-ionone* is one of a handful of volatiles—the term scientists use for chemicals we can smell—that Dr. Harry Klee has found contribute to appealing tomato flavor; this volatile provides fruity, punchy qualities particularly in yellow tomatoes, where it is accompanied by *beta-damascenone*, a woody, fruit-flavored volatile. Present in roses as well as heirloom tomatoes like Peacevine and Snowberry, *2-phenylethanol* has a floral fragrance. And *cis-3-hexenal*, found in high concentrations in green tomatoes, according to Klee's research, has the aroma of fresh-cut grass.



He handed me a golf ball-size dark red fruit. "This is a Stupice heirloom," he said. It tasted musky and sour.

"Tomato flavor is really complicated," he explained. "And because of that complexity, not much science had been done on it until we started ten years ago." A combination of sugars, acids, and volatiles (the technical name for chemicals we can smell) determines the tomato taste. Having the right balance of sugar and acid provides a foundation upon which tomato taste can be built. But since most of what we perceive as flavor is actually aroma, it is 15 or 20 volatile compounds that have the biggest impact on tomato taste.

Klee took the cap off a vial containing a clear liquid and waved it under my nose. I got a snootful of Juicy Fruit gum. "You're smelling beta-ionone," he said, passing me another vial. I sniffed again. There was no mistaking the summery fragrance of roses. "That is 2-phenylethanol, and it is actually a major component of rose scent. Neither one of these volatiles smells anything like a tomato," he said, though both are routinely found in the fruit. "There is no one

chemical that you'd smell and say, 'Oh, tomato.' It's a combination."

The taste panel I joined was part of Klee's attempt to identify which volatiles in what concentrations make a tomato taste good. The small heirloom called Cherry Roma—the epitome of the tomato's dance between sweetness and tartness—has consistently won top marks. Larger varieties such as Bloody Butcher and Brandywine, much beloved by home gardeners, have also scored well. University of Florida statisticians have found about 20 varieties that panelists ranked as exceptionally delicious.

Klee then worked with a machine called a gas chromatograph—in essence, an artificial nose—to "sniff" out volatiles in choice breeds. He has been able to say that the majority of good-tasting tomatoes have high concentrations of a handful of chemicals, beta-ionone and 2-phenylethanol among them.

Klee next has to search for the specific gene that causes tomatoes to produce those desirable chemicals. That search is rooted in a greenhouse a few hundred yards from Klee's lab where he pampers some of the vilest-tasting tomatoes on

the planet. They don't even look like tomatoes; they're green, and as hard, small, and unyielding as a marble. But their beauty lies at the genetic level. By crossing wild-tomato relatives like these with domesticated varieties, botanists can see which genes produce which chemicals—a process Klee likens to discovering that a criminal you are looking for lives in California. "You've narrowed the search considerably, but you still have a long way to go."

The criminal justice analogy is apt. To zero in on the gene he wants, Klee uses the same DNA technology that police investigators use to identify suspects. He has now identified about half of the volatiles he thinks must be present in a good tomato. Once all of them have been identified, they'll be like a tool kit that breeders can use to reintroduce tasty traits into industrial-grade fruits. "I think we can re-create a pretty good tomato," he said. I can hardly wait for the winter when his work is complete. 

BARRY ESTABROOK's *forthcoming book, Tomatoland, to be published by Andrews McNeel, is due out in June 2011.*

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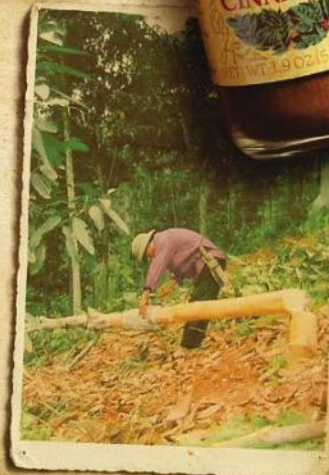
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# DRINK

## Crystal Clear

Austrian *schnaps* is the essence of peak-of-season fruit

BY MATT GROSS



**O**NE MORNING ABOUT 20 years ago, I arrived at Amherst Regional Junior High School to hear an amazing story from my friend Jimi: The previous day, he'd been walking with a few friends along some railroad tracks that ran through the hills of western Massachusetts, when he'd found a mostly full bottle of peach schnaps. After sniffing to make sure the liquid wasn't something else, they'd chugged it. They got really wasted. I was impressed.

I've heard many variations on this story: schnaps (often peach but sometimes peppermint) consumed in odd places (basement rec rooms, booze cruises) and by odd methods (a water gun?) by people more concerned with inebriation than with taste. Somehow, though, I never drank it myself. Maybe there was always enough beer around, or perhaps, once I'd acquired a mildly discriminating palate, the drink's debased reputation scared me off. When it came to schnaps, I thought, Why bother?

But that was before I learned about the good stuff. On a trip to Vienna last summer, I met Peter Hämmerle, the spirits critic for *Falstaff*, the country's top food magazine. A trim 53-year-old with a neat goatee, steely short hair, and rimless eyeglasses, Hämmerle grew up in Vorarlberg, the mountainous Alpine state where the making of *schnaps* is a local art. In his apartment I found myself surrounded by hundreds of bottles of the best *schnaps* in Austria—the country that produces more of this type of fruit brandy than anywhere else.

"I was born in a region where lots of fruits grow, and it's quite normal that everybody has trees behind their house," he told me. Once a year, a communal mobile still would circulate

MATT GROSS writes the "Getting Lost" column for the New York Times. His most recent article for *SAVEUR* was "Taipei, Family Style" (April 2010).



among the households, and the families would follow a process (as they still do today) that's little changed since distillation technology became widespread in Austria in the 18th century. At each home, someone would mash fruits—usually apples, pears, plums, and cherries—and let them ferment for several days, then distill them into a strong, clear liquor of around 65 percent alcohol. Water would then be added to make the drink palatable, bringing the alcohol content down to around 40 or 50 percent. This was real *schnaps* (as compared with schnapps, the sugar-sweetened, cordial-like American version I remember from my youth). *Schnaps*, which Hämmerle explained is simply the term for fruit brandy in Austria, is also known as *edelbrande* or *eau-de-vie*; other regional brandies, like France's *calvados* (made with apples) and eastern Europe's *slivovitz* (made with plums), fall in the category that Austrians would call *schnaps*. The drink was bottled immediately, and families kept bottles on hand to serve when guests stopped by, or at the end of a meal.

As common as *schnaps* was, it was rarely very

good. "The pears and apples you couldn't sell, you used them for *schnaps*," Hämmerle said. Nowadays, he added, producers realize that you cannot make fine *schnaps* from subpar fruit. As an example, he poured a *schnaps* made from Williams pears (the same variety as Bartlett) from Stockvogler's, a distillery one hour south of Vienna, into a traditional long-stemmed,

**THE PEAR SCHNAPS WAS INCREDIBLE, A BURST OF SHARP PEEL FOLLOWED BY RIPE FRUIT. IT WAS, AT FIRST TASTE, THE BEST PEAR I'D EVER EATEN**

V-shaped glass. The nose was incredible, a burst of sharp pear skin, and when I sipped it, the potent elixir spread ripe fruit and warm alcohol through every part of my mouth. It was, at first taste, the best pear I'd ever eaten—and yet it was like no pear I'd ever eaten. Abstracted from the action of biting and chewing, the *schnaps* was the Platonic ideal of the Williams pear.

That impression got complicated as we

tasted different *schnaps* and I encountered less-familiar fruits. I recognized the floral, citrusy quince, but the powerful almond flavor of rowanberries was altogether new to me, as was the mysterious *mispel*, with its vegetal, almost pickled-artichoke taste. (I later learned *mispel* is Japanese loquat. That hardly helped.) How could I make sense of these drinks? It was like reading Joyce's *Ulysses* without ever having heard of the *Odyssey*.

To get a better handle on *schnaps*, I drove to Riegersburg, a village in the region of Styria, near the borders of Hungary and Slovenia. There I found the distillery of Alois Gölles—one of the best producers in Austria, according to Hämmerle and others—where I was hit with a dizzying perfume. Raspberries! Inside, two copper stills were bubbling away with bright fermented fruit juice, and a computer display monitored temperature, pressure, volume, and other details pertaining to the distillation.

"Now is the raspberry season," said the stout 50-year-old Gölles. He explained the *schnaps*-making process: as fermented juice boils, a

**14 to Try** Serve *schnaps* slightly chilled in a small-bulbed or V-shaped glass, and don't swirl; that can destroy the spirit's delicate aroma. Below, tasting notes on some of our favorite Austrian bottles, as well as a few from artisanal new-world producers that make their fruit brandies in the *schnaps* tradition.—M.G.

**Clear Creek Distillery Kirschwasser** (\$28; 375 ml)

Some of the best American *schnaps* comes from Oregon fruit grower and distiller Stephen McCarthy. This version has the aroma of cherry candy (in a good way) and a tart, slightly medicinal bite.



**Clear Creek Distillery Williams Pear** (\$25; 375 ml)

This juicy-tasting *schnaps* smells of fruit so ripe it's ready to burst, but tastes of leaves, stems, and aromatic oils that leave a long, delightfully spicy finish.



**Gölles Cherry** (\$65; 375 ml) A very traditional *schnaps* that smells like ripe cherries and has an ever-so-slightly buttery aroma.

**Gölles Old Apple Barrel-Aged** (\$50; 375 ml) This barrel-aged apple *schnaps* has a golden hue and a round, smooth depth; the taste is spicy, woody, fruity.

**Gölles Wild Plum** (\$60; 375 ml) The aroma of this *schnaps*, from the highly regarded Austrian distiller, will at first smell mysteriously fruity. On the tongue, however, the spirit is tart and tight, opening up to a round plummy flavor that's easy to recognize.

**Gölles Apricot** (\$65; 375 ml) A strong, clear apricot aroma leads to a lush, bright, sweet-tart stone fruit flavor. This pretty *schnaps* has a much more pronounced aroma of apricot than most other versions. Sip this between courses as a palate refresher.



**St. George Aqua Perfecta Framboise Eau-de-Vie** (\$40; 375 ml) St. George is a microdistiller based in Alameda, California, and its raspberry *schnaps* is a bright, round swirl of berries that leaves a slightly syrupy flavor under your tongue.



**Reisetbauer Carrot** (\$76; 375 ml) Sweeter, earthier, and tasting intensely of carrot. A delicious novelty.

**Reisetbauer Ginger** (\$132; 375 ml) A pure expression of ginger flavor, juicy and refreshing (and untraditional). Great for sipping or cocktails.



**St. George Aqua Perfecta Basil Eau-de-Vie** (\$40; 375 ml) Made by distilling a combination of basil and grape brandy, this spirit is grassy and piney, with the minty undertones of fresh Thai basil. Consider it a cocktail component.

**Warwick Valley American Fruits Pear** (\$29; 375 ml) Unrefined and charmingly astringent, this is a throwback to the rustic fruit brandies of days gone by. Its small-batch distiller, in upstate New York, uses local fruit for all of its distillations.



**Westford Hill Framboise** (\$27; 375 ml) This micro distillery in northeast Connecticut is producing a wide variety of brandies with local fruit. The powerful nose of this raspberry version is followed by a ripe, juicy taste; on the tongue, the spirit relaxes and mellows into a balanced sip.

**Reisetbauer Williams Pear** (\$72; 375 ml) This aromatic *schnaps* from Austria's best known producer smells intensely of pear skin and tastes like the juicy fruit plucked from the tree at its moment of perfect ripeness. Imagine a fresh, flavorful pear in high-proof liquid form.



**Reisetbauer Raspberry** (\$132; 375 ml) This beautiful *schnaps* has a pronounced berry flavor, but the concentrated taste isn't needlessly fruity—it's woody and wild, like the berries themselves.



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condenser collects its fragrant vapors, which are then condensed into liquid form. In a third still was crystal-clear raw brandy; this was the spirit's second distillation, a common strategy, Gölles said, among producers who want a more refined, aromatic end product. But he added that distilling isn't simply a matter of boiling off and capturing the alcohol. No, the flavors—and off-flavors—come in waves: an unwanted, garlicky “head,” followed by the “heart,” the delicious stuff you actually want to drink, and finally the “tail,” which has an awkward scent of hay. Seventy pounds of raspberries are used to make each liter of *schnaps* (in contrast to 33 pounds of cheaper pears). And though the computer watches the temperature and alcohol content, it takes a trained nose like Gölles's to sniff out just where (and when) the heart begins and ends.

Gölles, the son of a farmer, comes to his profession with training. “I went to school not only for growing fruits but also to learn how to process fruits and make wine,” he said. After graduation, he persuaded his family to switch

**“THREE HUNDRED YEARS AGO, YOU WANTED A LOT OF SCHNAPS,” SAID THE SON OF THE DISTILLER. “TODAY, YOU WANT GOOD SCHNAPS”**

from growing fruits for the market to growing fruits for *schnaps*. This was in the late 1970s, when the *schnaps* industry was in decline. At the time, Austria's winemakers were rising to international prominence, and *schnaps* makers wanted to follow suit. Bigger firms were unable to adapt to the gourmet market, but small distillers like Gölles put an emphasis on quality and gained renown. Like all great *schnaps*, his express the characteristics that make fruits wonderful—the tight astringency of pear skins, the way an überripe blackberry dissolves on your tongue. His aged apple and plum *schnaps* are stored in oak barrels for seven years and have a round, rich flavor of concentrated fruit. But, Gölles's *schnaps* also have a slightly rough-around-the-edges mouth-feel from the intensity of the alcohol that reminds you of the drink's humble roots.

I found none of that rusticity in the spirits made by Hans Reisetbauer, a big, shambling 44-year-old who is almost universally acclaimed as Austria's best *schnaps* maker. Like Gölles, Reisetbauer is a farmer's son who saw a way to take his family's business in a new direction. As we walked among the roughly 20,000 fruit trees on his farm in Axberg, in Upper Austria, he told

me that his family had been raising commodity crops like corn when he decided to make *schnaps* from the best fruit he could get his hands on. He leased 3.7 acres from his father and by 1995 had 100 bottles of Williams pear *schnaps* and 200 bottles of *kletzenbrine* (dried-pear *schnaps*), some of which he brought to the Destillata, an annual championship for *schnaps* makers. His eaux-de-vie won “Schnaps of the Year.”

The fact that Reisetbauer raises his own fruit gives him an advantage over other distillers, who often purchase theirs from as far away as Spain. Reisetbauer can pick his pears and plums the moment they ripen and ferment them immediately, capturing flavors and aromas at their peak. “Fifty percent of our quality is the fruit,” Reisetbauer said. Unlike Gölles, Reisetbauer strives for an utterly clean *schnaps*, with none of the fiery alcohol to distract from (or, depending on your taste, enhance) the flavor; his *schnaps* are not less alcoholic, but he distills them so that their intensity is balanced by fruit. You see this in his juicy, fragrant fruit *schnaps*, as well as in his more forward-looking products, like carrot *schnaps*, which tastes more like carrots than most carrots do.

After witnessing all this delicious progress, I was curious: What was *schnaps* like before Gölles and Reisetbauer? So, I took a train into the Austrian Alps to Stanz, a village of 654 people—and 54 small-scale distilleries—high above the Inn River. There were apple, pear, plum, and cherry trees in bloom everywhere, and a plaque in town explained that ancient Romans had brought the art of fruit cultivation to the area. It was a Sunday; many of the distilleries were closed; when I stepped into Giggus, a family-run enterprise going back generations (the name is dialect for *schnaps*), the distiller's 17-year-old son, Daniel Nothdurfter, showed me the stills, which were small and old and produced liquor through a single distillation. This was a far cry from the technology behind Reisetbauer and Gölles, yet the drinks had an undeniably rustic charm. An old varietal of plum was sticky and musty, and the gentian violet woodsy and smooth, like a drink of wildflowers. I asked Daniel how his family's *schnaps* had changed over the years.

“Three hundred years ago, you wanted to have a lot of *schnaps*,” he said. “Today, you want to have good *schnaps*.”

And today, I thought as I walked through the village, today I will. 🐦

See THE PANTRY, page 134, for information on where to buy *schnaps*.

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# MEMORIES

## New and Improved

Dinner at Grandma's house was always a revelation

BY JEREMY N. SMITH

**T**HE WRITER MICHAEL POLLAN has made a career of attacking people like my grandmother. Pollan, of course, has written numerous best-selling books promoting sustainable foodways. My grandmother, Sylvia Schur—who passed away at the age of 92 last year—had a hand in developing the Whopper. When Pollan writes in *In Defense of Food* (Penguin, 2008), “Instead of food, we’re consuming ‘edible foodlike substances’—no longer the products of nature but of food science,” he’s talking about Grandma’s bread and butter.

Over the course of her 50-year career, she served as a food editor for *Seventeen*, *Look*, *Flair*, and *Parade* magazines; a food marketer who prepared advertising spreads for publications like *The New York Times Magazine*; a food science consultant; and an author who wrote more than 20 cookbooks, including *The Complete Blender Cookbook* (Simon & Schuster, 1965) and *The Tappan Creative Cookbook for Microwave Ovens and Ranges* (Holt, Reinhart and Winston, 1976). A grocer’s daughter who studied organic chemistry in college, she started her own New York–based business, Creative Food Services, which consulted for Ocean Spray, Cadbury Schweppes, and General Foods. When the in-house experts failed to make a product people wanted to eat, they called my grandmother, who had a knack for identifying the exact ingredient—wheat gluten, powdered orange peel, paprika—to transform a floundering industrial recipe. The dozens of “edible foodlike substances” she helped develop include Cran-Apple juice, Clamato (the tomato–clam juice), and too many flavors of Campbell’s soup to count. Growing up, I taste-tested airline sushi, microwavable milk shakes, novel variations on



baked potatoes, and whatever else Grandma’s kitchen lab had been hired to develop. I felt like I was related to Willy Wonka and always had a golden ticket for the factory tour.

“Taste this.” I remember a pretty woman in a white lab coat, one of Grandma’s assistants, approaching me with a plate of candies.

“Mmm...butterscotch,” I murmured.

“Sugar-free.” She winked.

Though I largely agree with Pollan’s indictments of the American diet—my wife is a local-food and sustainable-agriculture activist; we shop at farmers’ markets and belong to a food co-op—I think that many people fail to appreciate the good things about the golden age of food science. Back then, food science pros like my grandmother were voices of the people, savvy home cooks, working moms, trying to come up with tasty—and sometimes healthy—ways to get dinner on the table. She was always telling stories of how she tried to steer executives in the right direction. Long before Pollan pub-

lished *Defense*, my grandmother advised Burger King executives that the Whopper was too big. And she dismissed Stove Top stuffing to Kraft as “salt with artificial flavors.”

I used to revel in her stories. She liked to tell the one about the young artist she worked with in the early 1950s. “He was a very charming young man, slender and unprepossessing,” she recalled. But he balked when asked to design a page for a casserole made with Campbell’s cream of mushroom soup. “He said, ‘You want me to draw a can of soup?’” she told me. “I said, ‘Look at it, Andy, it’s beautiful. It has this nice bright red top and beautiful letters. You can do that!’ And he did, and did, and did.”

By the time I graduated from high school, Grandma had sold Creative Food Services. She was almost 80 and legally blind. Nonetheless, the inventions kept coming. I remember her fridge being filled with glass beakers and test tubes when she was developing a new Worcestershire sauce for Lea & Perrins. It was hard to imagine that the foods she prepared in her ordinary home kitchen were reproduced on an industrial scale and shipped to supermarkets around the world.

When I was in college, I brought my roommates to Grandma’s for what would be my last of her home-cooked meals. We were vegetarians and she fed us fresh corn, grilled mushrooms, and honeyed squash appetizers. One of the main dishes was rice pilaf with green beans and almonds. The other was a microwave dinner.

Amazement silenced the table when Grandma appeared with the cardboard tray, which held meatballs and marinara sauce, one of my favorite dishes she used to make for me as a kid.

“Not to worry—100 percent vegetarian!” she proclaimed. “It’s a wheat-based, complete-protein meat substitute.” She had recently obtained a patent on the “meatballs.” Like everything Grandma made, they were delicious. 

JEREMY N. SMITH is the author of *Growing a Garden City* (Skyhorse Publishing, 2010). He lives in Missoula, Montana.





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CLASSIC

# The Big Cheese

The communal charm of Swiss fondue

BY SYLVIE BIGAR



Guests at a fondue party in South London, 1983.

**A**S A TEENAGER GROWING UP in Geneva, Switzerland, I loved spending Friday nights at my friend Michelle's house. Following the Catholic tradition of meatless Fridays, Michelle's father joined the multitudes of Swiss families who prepared cheese fondue. At home, we never ate the dish; my dad was on orders from the doctor to avoid rich foods. While the rest of Switzerland happily stirred the gooey mix, our family lit the Shabbat candles and sat down to my Parisian mother's *boeuf à la mode*.

Perhaps that's why, as I entered my rebellious teens, I set out to rectify this gap in my Swiss education and try as many types of fondue as I could. I never forgot the bland tomato version at ski camp, or my high school boyfriend's delicious addition of chopped dried porcini to the bubbling pot of

cheese. When I moved to the States in 1984, I was surprised to find that Americans had developed a fondness for the Swiss national dish and had created versions of their own (see "Form and Function," page 58). Yet it was only last December, back in my native Switzerland, that I savored the best fondue of my life.

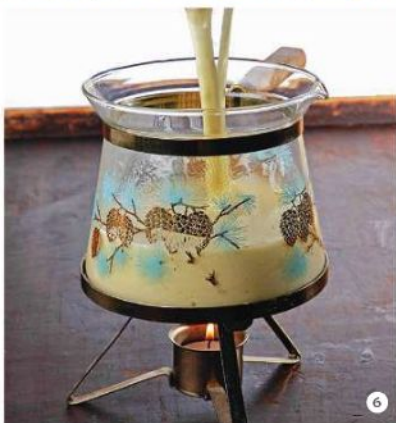
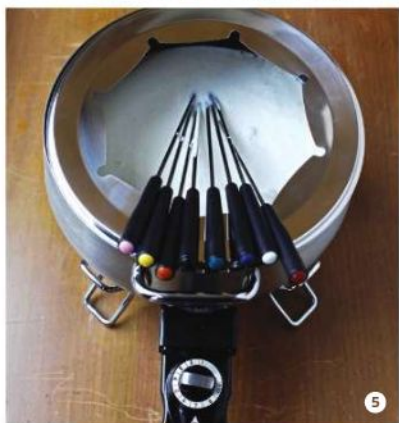
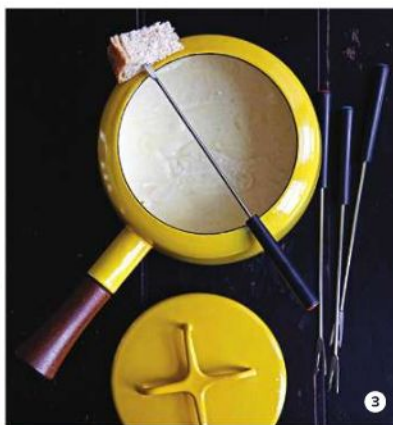
I was with my American husband and my stepchildren at La Buvette des Bains, a casual eatery located on a jetty that extends into Lake Geneva, close to where I was born. In addition to being a restaurant, this unique 656-foot-long pier harbors Les Bains des Pâquis, a renovated version of the

Sylvie Bigar is a food and travel writer based in New York City. This is her first article for *SAVEUR*.









**Form and Function** Originally a simple clay vessel, the shape, material, and, in some cases, function of the fondue pot have changed over the years. The traditional container for holding fondue, called a *caquelon*, is a glazed ceramic pot with a thick handle. The squat, broad shape, as in this example from the Swiss company Landert **1**, is designed so that the bottom and sides heat evenly, which helps prevent the cheese from scorching. The fondue fad that swept the United States during the 1960s and early 1970s spawned styles of cookware that reflected the tastes of the era. Most designs were some version of a cheerfully colored pot made of enamel-coated steel **2**, perched on a stand over a Sterno can or a burner fueled with denatured alcohol, and equipped with a set of color-coded forks. The design-forward American company Dansk made a pot with a teak handle **3**, part of its Kobenstyle line, created by Danish designer Jens Quistgaard. Cathrineholm of Norway manufactured another emblematic pot, which stood out for its distinctive lotus pattern **4**. As mechan-

ical appliances continued to populate the American kitchen in the 1950s, so the fondue pot went electric—this contemporary example from Cuisinart **5** has a dial for adjusting heat. The craze also inspired an assortment of fondues, and the different containers for cooking them. Chocolate fondue and fondue bourguignonne, raw beef dunked in hot oil, are said to have been created in the late 1950s by Konrad Egli, chef-owner of Swiss Chalet restaurant in New York City. The recommended pot for keeping chocolate molten without burning it employs the gentle flame of a tea candle **6**. A metal pot with a porcelain insert **7** works equally well for chocolate or cheese. Remove the insert, and the pot is ideal for meat fondue, since copper can withstand the heat of the boiling oil. Since the early 1990s, the interest in fondue has revived. The French cookware line Le Creuset currently sells a high-end model **8**, made of porcelain-enameled cast iron, which encourages even distribution of heat. (See THE PANTRY, page 134, for sources.) —Gabriella Gershenson

old 1872 public baths across from the Jet d'Eau, Geneva's landmark water fountain. But what drew me in was the restaurant's storied version of *fondue au crémant*, a mix of cheeses melted with local sparkling wine.

Seated for dinner at a long rectangular communal table, a few steps from the wood-burning heaters, I took in the sweeping vistas of Geneva's silvery Cathedral St-Pierre. Outside the large windows, ducks and swans honked and flapped, probably hoping for leftover bread. Suddenly, a blue vinyl apron-clad waiter appeared cradling a steaming *caquelon*, the traditional fondue pot, which he placed on a stand over a Sterno cup. The smell was intoxicating. I skewered my first piece of day-old baguette—fresh bread would not be firm enough to hold the cheese—and

dipped in. Silky and almost frothy, the mixture coated it perfectly. The cheeses blended so well with the sparkling wine, which added a slight effervescence to the fondue, that each bite became more addictive than the last. Half nutty aged Gruyère and half Vacherin Fribourgeois, a robust semifirm Swiss cows' milk cheese, the fondue had just the right balance of salt and tang.

Though Switzerland lays claim to fondue, its origins are murky. There is no inventor, no official recipe. The word *fondue* comes from the French *fondre* (to melt). The first written record of molten cheese and wine, which appeared around 800 B.C. in Homer's *Iliad*, is not so different from the formula we know today—the classic Swiss Neuchâteloise is an aromatic blend

of Emmentaler and Gruyère cheeses, white wine, and kirsch, a cherry brandy. One theory credits Swiss peasants with dreaming up this appetizing way of repurposing cheese rinds and stale bread. There was certainly plenty of cheese to be had—by the early 17th century, the Swiss were already considered among the best cheese makers in Europe. Ethnologist Isabelle Raboud-Schüle, director of the Gruérien Museum in Bulle, which specializes in the history of the Gruyère region of Switzerland, says the oldest printed recipe in Switzerland to feature wine, cheese, and bread appeared in *Kochbuch der Anna Margherita Gessner*, published in Zurich in 1699. Several 18th- and 19th-century fondue recipes—including Brillat-Savarin's from 1825—called for eggs, resulting in foods that



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were more akin to soufflés or scrambled eggs than melted cheese fondue.

"The popularity of the dish as we know it only originated in the 1930s," says Raboud-Schüle. "As a way to sell more cheese, the Swiss Cheese Union launched marketing campaigns and blanketed the country with such slogans as 'Fondue creates a good mood,' or 'Perfect weather for a fondue.'" The promoters sent cases of *caquelons* to ski clubs throughout the country and even to soldiers in the Swiss army, whose hearty reception helped popularize fondue. Gradually, the dish became part of the national identity. TSR, a Swiss television network, estimates that today about 88 percent of Swiss citizens own a fondue set.

My Swiss father-in-law once trumpeted, "It's impossible to ruin a fondue!"—which is not entirely true. Cheese can overheat and become stringy, or never emulsify with the wine at all. One of the keys to ensuring a smooth texture is adding a starch, like flour or cornstarch, to bond the cheese and wine together. Combining a moderately moist cheese, such as Gruyère, with a fattier cheese like Vacherin Fribourgeois helps create a balanced blend (see "The Building Blocks of Fondue," below); Appenzeller, a firm yet creamy cows' milk cheese with tiny holes, works just as well in place of the Fri-

bourgeois. But each region believes its local cheeses make the best fondue, and the choice is entirely up to the cook. James Beard once praised an American homemaker for substituting cheddar and bourbon for the customary Swiss cheeses and kirsch. Perhaps fondue resonates so well with the Swiss because variations unite the regions around the pot: a mirror of a nation of four official languages within 16,000 square miles.

At home in New York, armed with the Buvette des Bains recipe, I set out to re-create *fondue au crémant* for my family. We grated the Gruyère and the soft Vacherin Fribourgeois. Instead of Swiss sparkling wine, which is nearly impossible to find, I poured Alsatian *crémant* into a pot, set it on the stove over a medium flame, and diluted cornstarch in the wine. Some cooks rub half a garlic clove along the sides of the pot before beginning to cook, but my family loves garlic, so I minced two cloves and dropped them into the warming pot. As soon as the liquid started to simmer, I added the cheese and stirred steadily with a wooden spoon until it began to melt. I employed the traditional figure-eight motion, ensuring that the mixture moved constantly and didn't seize up. My children Sophie and Sébastien tore a baguette into chunks.



The blend, a thick and silky mix that clung to the spoon, was soon ready. I quickly ignited the Sterno and placed the flaming cup in the metal holder under the fondue pot. Last, I mixed baking soda with a splash of cognac for added froth and flavor, poured it into the *caquelon*, and set the concoction over the fire. Everyone rushed to the table. There may be endless variations of fondue, but for this Swiss-French-American family, the winning version originated somewhere along Lake Geneva. Just like me. 🐼

## FONDUE AU CRÉMANT

(Fondue with Sparkling Wine)

SERVES 8

This recipe is based on one from La Buvette des Bains restaurant in Geneva, Switzerland.

**The Building Blocks of Fondue** The essential ingredients of fondue—cheese, liquid, acid, and starch—when combined correctly, become heady and unforgettable. Rich cheeses meld with a liquid base. Acid balances the rich combination, and starch ensures a satiny texture. Below, the hows and whys of preparing the perfect fondue. —G.G.

**CHEESE** Since fondue is a Swiss dish, native cheeses such as Gruyère and Emmentaler are the traditional choices. But you can create fondue from a variety of cheeses, from cheddar to blue cheese, as long as they melt easily (look for moderate moisture and fat content). Avoid non-melting cheeses such as *halloúmi* and feta.



**LIQUID** Adding alcohol to fondue—be it champagne, beer, or dry white wine—builds flavor and keeps the cheese from scorching or clumping. Nonalcoholic liquids serve the same purpose. Water is acceptable, though we recommend experimenting with more flavorful fluids like chicken broth or sparkling apple cider.



**ACID** A squeeze of lemon or a splash of dry white wine helps balance the richness in fondue. These elements also introduce acidity, which stabilizes melted cheese; the citric acid in lemon juice and the tartaric acid in wine prevent heated cheese from curdling. If you're not cooking with wine, be sure to add lemon juice to your liquid base.



**STARCH** The use of cornstarch, potato starch, or flour in fondue helps emulsify the fat in the cheese with the liquid, whether it's wine, water, or broth, and creates a luxurious, silky, melting texture in the process. You won't taste it, but you will enjoy the appealing body that starch lends this dish.



- 2 1/4 cups sparkling white wine
- 1 tbsp. cornstarch
- 4 cloves garlic, halved lengthwise
- 1 lb. Gruyère, grated
- 1 lb. Vacherin Fribourgeois or Appenzeller, grated (see page 134)
- 2 tbsp. cognac or French brandy
- 1/4 tsp. baking soda
- 1 tbsp. fresh lemon juice
- Kosher salt, to taste
- Day-old country-style bread, cubed

Whisk together 2 tbsp sparkling wine and cornstarch in a small bowl; set aside. Rub garlic cloves over the interior of a 5-qt. pot and drop garlic into pot. Add remaining sparkling wine; bring to a boil and whisk in cornstarch mixture; discard garlic. Reduce heat to low; add cheeses in batches, stirring, until melted, 10 minutes. Stir together cognac and baking soda in a small bowl, add to pot, and stir until smooth. Stir in lemon juice and salt. Transfer to fondue pot, set over a lit Sterno cup, and serve with bread.



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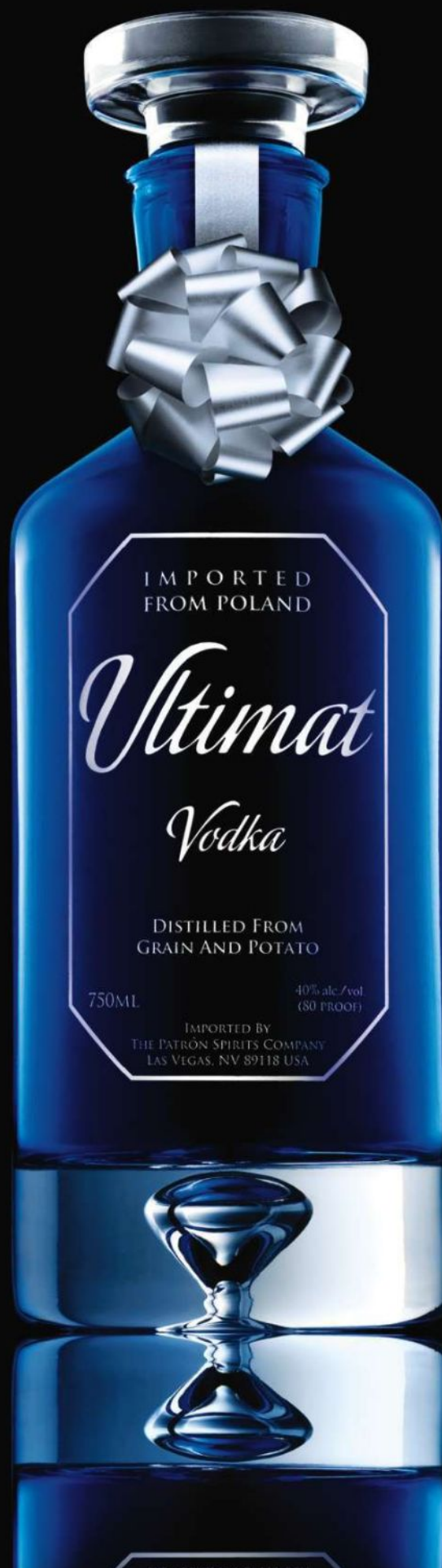
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Anthony Ethuin (Monte-Carlo Bay Hotel, Monaco), Didier Elena (Executive Chef, Adour Alain Ducasse at The St. Regis New York), Francois Payard (FPB Bakery and Payard, New York), Maguy Maccario, Consul General of Monaco in New York, Cedric Tovar (Executive Chef, Feast & Fetes/Daniel Boulud, New York), Marcel Ravin (Executive Chef, Monte-Carlo Bay Hotel, Monaco), Shaun Hergatt (Executive Chef, SHO Shaun Hergatt), Philippe Brito (Monte Carlo Bay Hotel, Monaco)



Monaco Foundation-USA and the Princess Grace Foundation-USA. Dishes were complemented by fine French wines from Chateau Coutet and Chateau Latour, Champagne Paul Goerg and handcrafted single malt whiskey from The Balvenie Distillery, plus café treats from Nespresso.

**A celebration of culinary, cultural and charitable activities at some of the Big Apple's most breathtaking venues.**

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Karen Akers and Maguy Maccario at The University Club

the High Patronage of His Serene Highness Prince Albert II, to benefit the Prince Albert II of Monaco Foundation-USA and the Princess Grace Foundation-USA. Reinforcing Monaco's exceptional gastronomic status, Chef Ravin, along with his **Pastry Chef Philippe Brito**, **Chef de Partie Anthony Ethuin**, and **Chef Robert Bagli**, excelled with an imaginative and appetizing menu reminiscent of Monaco's cuisine and his own culinary heritage.

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# HOME FOR THE HOLIDAYS

In northern Italy, a cook reconnects with her family's Christmas traditions

Author Roberta Corradin (left) with her mother, Lucia Gros Corradin, in Oulx, Italy.







# By Roberta Corradin

## Photographs by Penny De Los Santos

**I**'M A GOOD ITALIAN GIRL: no matter where I am when I wake up on December 22—and, since I work as a food and travel writer, I might be very far away—I catch a flight back to my mother's house to help her prepare Christmas lunch. Mom still lives in the town where I was born, in the Alpine village of Oulx, nearly 50 miles west of Turin. Oulx is technically in Italy (specifically, in the region of Piedmont), but it's only eight miles from the French border, and until the late 19th century the area belonged to France. As a result, the local culture is a mix of Gallic and Italian influences. When it comes to food, you're as likely to find fantastic crepes as you are lovely handmade pastas.

Most of the food that I cook with my mother, however, is neither French nor Italian: it is Occitan. Occitan is an ethnic group that dates back to the fifth century and is distinguished by its *langue d'oc*, an ancient tongue (which happened to be the language of the legendary Knights of the Round Table) from which Provençal and Catalan are derived. While the Occitan community inhabited large swaths of western Europe in the Middle Ages, it has dwindled to just a few geographical pockets in Spain's Catalonia, southern France (including the Languedoc region), and several valleys in the Italian Alps, such as Val di Susa, where Oulx is located. In Italy, the Occitan population is tiny—about 200,000—but we have a strong identity, defined by our language (which I learned from my parents) and our foodways, to which we cling fiercely. Occitan cooking in northern Italy is rustic, based on the cheeses and grains and vegetables that have long flourished here. While local Piedmontese food evolved over the centuries

to become richer and more refined, Occitan cooking remained true to its roots as simple, satisfying peasant fare.

As distinct as our native cuisine may be, many Italians, even the Piedmontese, aren't familiar with it. It's rarely served outside the home, perhaps because people consider it too humble for restaurant fare. This annoys my mother; in fact, when Turin hosted the Winter Olympics in 2006, I took her to the region's official restaurant, and she was outraged that not a single Occitan dish was on offer. She summoned the manager over to our table and gave him a piece of her mind. Where were the *cabiette*, those wonderful gnocchi made with potato, egg, and celery? Or the savory beetroot pies called *tarte' d carotta ruja*? What about the Sant'Antonio apple cake, flavored and tinted with red wine, that Occitan cooks slice into small squares and serve with coffee? The poor man had to listen to her diatribe until, finally, she became hungry and reluctantly ordered off the menu. Still, her point was made.

MY MOTHER'S LOVE FOR OCCITAN cooking—and her love of cooking in general—is one of the reasons I make a point of getting home to help with the Christmas meal every year. She's a natural, intuitive cook, one of those people who can whip up dishes by heart and from scratch every time, using their senses rather than written recipes. When I started learning her holiday recipes, years ago, my main challenge was to continually stop Mom on her way to the cupboard or the fridge to measure her spoon of butter or glassful of milk so that I could scribble down the quantity. "What do you need that for?" she'd say. "Can't you feel by yourself that the dough is crying out for more milk?"

Christmas was the biggest event of the year when I was young, and Mom and her sister, my aunt Lidia, would start cooking days

ROBERTA CORRADIN is the author of *Taste and Tradition: A Culinary Journey Through Northern and Central Italy* (Silvana Editoriale, 2010). She divides her time between Paris, Rome, New York, and southeastern Sicily.

Facing page, *brasato vitello* (veal braised in wine; see page 76 for a recipe).







Making this Christmas meal with my mother always reminds me that I'm inheriting a tradition, one that might otherwise disappear







in advance. Most Italian families have their big meal on Christmas Eve, but since my family would always go to church that night, we celebrated with a lunch on Christmas Day. There would be at least a dozen people at the table, 18 if my mother's brothers, Uncle Marco and Uncle Candido, were attending the meal with their families. Regardless of the number of guests, my mom and Aunt Lidia would cook as if they were feeding an army of soldiers. Back then, I was in charge of minor jobs, like selecting parsley and celery leaves or beating egg yolks and sugar.

For as long as I can remember, the menu has included the same staples. It's a mix of Occitan dishes, from that savory beetroot pie to *soupe crasse*, a luscious cheese first course thickened with *grissini* breadsticks, and Piedmontese classics, such as ravioli, *vitello tonnato* (cold sliced veal with tuna-caper sauce; our version is French-inspired, made with a mayonnaise- rather than a cream-based sauce), and *brasato vitello* (veal braised in barolo wine). There's always a slew of Occitan desserts—in addition to the wine-apple cake, we make a rum-spiked vanilla pudding called *la tarte* and a chocolate custard topped with floating icebergs of meringue, called *la creme*.

Nowadays, Christmas is different. Our family has shrunk: my father; Aunt Lidia and her husband, Uncle Secondo; and several others are no longer with us. There are no children, so we usually invite a few friends with kids—Christmas needs at least one child. Even still, I always return home, like an unfailing boomerang, from wherever I am (last year it was Texas; the year before that, Samoa), because I love the excitement of composing the menu with my mother (as if it's ever going to be anything different from last year's); the fun of buying groceries together again; the comfort and warmth of sharing space in her kitchen. Making this Christmas meal reminds me that I'm inheriting a special tradition, one that might otherwise disappear.

THIS YEAR, I DO AS I ALWAYS DO: as soon as my plane touches the ground, I call Giampiero Ariassetto, my favorite butcher in Turin, and reserve the veal for the *vitello tonnato* and stewed *brasato*. Then I drive from Turin to Oulx, and when I get home, Mom and I brave the cold to go shopping for last-minute ingredients; this year we buy apples, vegetables, soft *toma* cheese from nearby Sauze d'Oulx for the *soupe crasse*, lard for the baked goods. Via Roma, in the center of town, is crowded with people doing the same thing; families walking arm in arm under twinkling Christmas lights, holding heavy shopping bags with their free hands.

The next morning, we start with the fillings and the doughs. We sauté the beetroot with onions for the savory pie filling, mash the potatoes with celery for the gnocchi, then stew (*continued on page 73*)

**Clockwise from top left:** veal with tuna-caper sauce; Lucia Gros Corradin in her kitchen in Oulx; Sant'Antonio apple tart. (See page 74 for recipes.)





A winter scene outside of Oulx, in Italy's Val di Susa. This Alpine region is one of Europe's few remaining outposts of Occitan culture.







We prepare the pastas, desserts, and breads for two days straight, and by Christmas morning we're as excited as everyone else to eat







(continued from page 69) apple slices in red wine and spices for the pie. We make two different doughs: a yeasted one, which Mom covers in a red blanket as if it were a baby taking a nap, for the beetroot pie crust; and a milky, soft dough for the apple cake. One thing I've learned from cooking with my mom (and it's something that she learned from her mother) is that desserts need time to develop their flavors, so we always make them a day before the meal. I've adopted this rule as my own, and whenever I have friends over for a big meal, I tackle the sweets first.

While the beetroot pie and the apple cake are baking in the oven, we boil the veal for *vitello tonnato*; the meat also provides the broth and the filling for the ravioli. We prep for hours: mashing capers and tuna into homemade mayonnaise; making a fresh herb sauce in which we marinate anchovies; rolling out *cabiette* dumplings and stuffing dozens of ravioli. We cook non-stop for two days straight, and by the morning of Christmas Day we're as excited as everyone else to eat.

We set the table as if we're working in a Michelin-starred restaurant—the finest glasses, the prettiest plates. Guests begin to arrive: my brother Carlo with his girlfriend, and my friends Barbara and Angelo with little 18-month-old Tommaso (the requisite child). Platters are passed and compliments doled out, but my mom is our harshest critic; she's happy with the beetroot pie—crispy outside, with the creamy, slightly wet filling—but she thinks I wasn't generous enough in slathering the sauce on the *vitello tonnato*: "It doesn't matter that you are serving more sauce on the side!" she tells me between bites. "You have to strike the perfect ratio between meat and sauce by yourself." I make up for that shortcoming with the exemplary *soupe crasse*, which Mom admits is perfectly seasoned with onion, juniper, and peppercorns. Everyone goes back for seconds.

As is the case every year, the meal lasts late into the afternoon. Our guests leave, sated and sleepy, with heavy doggie bags. We decline their offers to help wash the dishes, preferring to do them ourselves so that we can chat about the food and what we might do differently next time. For our family and friends Christmas lunch was just another huge holiday meal, but for Mom and me it was, as it is every year, all about the joys of cooking together. 🐾



Clockwise from top left: vanilla-rum custard; author Corradin serving guests at Christmas lunch; veal and escarole ravioli. (See page 74 for recipes.)



## ACCIUGHE CON SALSA VERDE

(Anchovies in Green Sauce)

SERVES 8

Use salt-packed anchovy fillets to make this antipasto (pictured below right) from Luciano De Giacomini's *Nonna Genia's Classic Langhe Cookbook* (Asti-libri, 1982).

- 1/2 cup extra-virgin olive oil
- 1/4 cup minced basil
- 1/4 cup minced flat-leaf parsley
- 2 tbsp. white wine vinegar
- 1/4 tsp. crushed red chile flakes
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- 2 hard-boiled egg yolks
- Kosher salt, to taste
- 4 oz. (about 20) anchovies, rinsed, soaked, and butterflied
- Country-style bread, for serving

In a bowl, whisk together oil, basil, parsley, vinegar, chile flakes, garlic, and yolks; season lightly with salt. Pat anchovies dry; arrange a third of the anchovies in a bowl and cover with a third of the parsley sauce; repeat twice more. Cover and let sit at room temperature for 1 hour. Serve with bread.

## AGNOLOTTI

(Veal and Escarole Ravioli)

SERVES 10

The author's mother, Lucia Gros Corradin, serves these ravioli (pictured on page 72) in chicken or veal broth.

- 3 cups flour, plus more
- 1 1/2 tsp. kosher salt, plus more to taste
- 5 eggs
- 1/2 head escarole, cored, chopped, and washed
- 3 tbsp. unsalted butter
- 4 oz. ground veal
- 1/4 cup freshly grated Parmesan
- 1/4 tsp. freshly grated nutmeg
- 1 egg white
- Freshly ground black pepper, to taste
- 5 cups chicken broth, for serving

1 In a large bowl, whisk together flour and salt. Make a well in center and add 4 eggs and 5–6 tbsp. water; mix with a

fork until a dough forms. Transfer to a lightly floured work surface; knead until smooth, about 8 minutes. Wrap dough in plastic and chill for 1 hour.

2 Meanwhile, make filling: Bring a large pot of salted water to a boil and add escarole; cook until just tender, about 1 minute. Drain escarole; transfer to a kitchen towel. Gather up ends of towel; squeeze out liquid; set aside. Heat butter in a 10" skillet over medium-high heat. Add escarole; cook for 4 minutes. Transfer escarole to a food processor along with remaining egg, veal, Parmesan, nutmeg, egg

decreasing one setting each time until you've reached the second to last setting, creating a 1/16"-thick sheet of pasta. Cut sheet in half crosswise; set one half aside. Using a teaspoon-size measuring spoon, place balls of filling, spaced about 1/2" apart, on dough. Top with reserved pasta, using your fingers to press around each ball to push out any trapped air. Using a knife, divide individual ravioli, trimming edges. Transfer ravioli to a lightly floured baking sheet; repeat to make 60 ravioli.

4 To serve, heat broth in a pan over medium-high heat; set aside. Bring



Anchovies in green sauce

white, and salt and pepper; pulse until just smooth. Transfer filling to a bowl, cover with plastic wrap, and chill.

3 Divide dough into 16 pieces. Working with one piece of dough at a time (cover remaining dough with a tea towel), flatten it into a rectangle, sprinkle with flour, and pass through a hand-cranked pasta machine set at its widest setting. Fold dough into thirds like a letter, creating another rectangle, and feed short edge through pasta roller at its widest setting; repeat folding process twice more. Decrease one setting and roll dough again; repeat,

a large pot of salted water to a boil. Working in 4 batches, add the ravioli and cook, stirring occasionally, until the pasta is al dente, 3–4 minutes. Using a slotted spoon, divide the ravioli between bowls. Ladle broth over the ravioli and serve hot.

## SOUPE CRASSE

(Cheese and Bread Soup)

SERVES 8–10

Typically made with day-old bread or breadsticks during the holidays, this northern Italian specialty (pictured on page 76) comes out like a luscious casserole of melted cheese and bread.

- 3 1/2 cups beef or chicken stock
- 5 tbsp. unsalted butter
- 10 oz. Italian breadsticks
- 1 lb. Taleggio cheese, sliced
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste
- 1/2 small onion, thinly sliced

1 Bring stock to a boil in a saucepan; remove from heat. Grease bottom of a 3-qt. high-sided skillet with 1 tbsp. butter. Break breadsticks into 2 1/2" pieces. Put 1 layer breadsticks in skillet. Cover breadsticks with layer of cheese. Continue layering breadsticks and cheese; ladle stock over breadsticks one ladleful at a time and heat skillet over low heat. Bring to a simmer; cook, without stirring, for 30 minutes.

2 Meanwhile, melt remaining butter in a 12" skillet over medium heat. Add onions; cook, until onions are soft, 8–10 minutes. Set a fine sieve over a small bowl. Strain butter, pressing onions with back of a spoon; discard onions. Drizzle butter over soup; continue cooking for 10 more minutes. To serve, spoon onto serving plates.

## VITELLO TONNATO

(Veal with Tuna-Caper Sauce)

SERVES 10–12

Many Piedmontese families serve this cold antipasto (pictured on page 68), a classic combination of tender veal and a creamy sauce, on Christmas.

- 1 1/2 tsp. kosher salt, plus more
- 12 whole peppercorns
- 6 whole cloves
- 3 bay leaves
- 2 fresh sage leaves
- 2 carrots, halved crosswise
- 1 large yellow onion, halved
- 1 rib celery, halved crosswise
- 1 sprig fresh rosemary
- 1 2 1/2-lb. piece veal top round, tied with kitchen twine
- 2 tsp. Dijon mustard
- 2 egg yolks
- 1 1/2 cups extra-virgin olive oil
- 7 oz. canned tuna, minced
- 3 tbsp. capers, minced, plus more
- 2 tbsp. fresh lemon juice
- 5 anchovy filets, minced





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**Ground black pepper, to taste**  
**Flat-leaf parsley, for garnish**

① Bring salt, peppercorns, cloves, bay leaves, sage, carrots, onion, celery, rosemary, and 8 cups water to a boil in a 6-qt. Dutch oven. Add veal, reduce heat; simmer, covered, until a thermometer reads 135°, 30–40 minutes. Transfer veal to a plate; cover with foil. Using a slotted spoon, transfer carrots to a cutting board and cut into 1/4" pieces; set aside. Discard broth.

② Whisk together mustard and yolks in a bowl. While whisking, drizzle in 1 tsp. oil until mixture is thick. While whisking, drizzle in 1 1/4 cups oil until sauce becomes creamy. In a bowl, whisk together remaining oil, tuna, capers, lemon juice, and anchovies. Whisk mixture into sauce; season lightly with salt and pepper; set aside.

③ Thinly slice veal across grain and arrange on a platter; top with sauce. Garnish with carrots, capers, parsley, lemon, and olives.

**Pairing note:** A crisp white like Matteo Correggia Roero Arneis 2008 (\$19) is a lovely match for this piquant dish.

## BRASATO VITELLO

(Braised Veal)

SERVES 6–8

When braised with wine, veal shoulder (pictured on page 67) tenderizes and soaks up the aromatic liquid.

- 1 2 1/4-lb. piece boneless veal shoulder, tied with twine
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste
- 4 oz. lardo or fatback, minced
- 4 tbsp. unsalted butter
- 1 750-ml bottle of red wine
- 4 carrots
- 4 ribs celery
- 3 medium onions
- 1 clove garlic, crushed
- 4 1/2 cups beef stock
- 10 whole cloves
- 1 3" stick cinnamon
- 1 bay leaf
- 1 sprig rosemary

- 3 small potatoes, cut into 1/2" pieces
- 1/4 cup light rum

① Heat oven to 300°. Season veal with salt and pepper. Heat half the lardo and half the butter in a 6-qt. Dutch oven over medium-high heat. Add veal; cook, turning, until browned, 8–10 minutes. Transfer veal to a plate; set aside. Quarter 1 carrot, 1 rib celery, and 2 onions; add along with garlic to Dutch oven and cook until browned, 12–15 minutes. Add wine; boil until wine is almost evaporated, 12–15 minutes. Add 1/2 cup water; boil until almost evapo-



Cheese and bread soup

rated. Repeat twice more. Return veal to pot, and add 4 cups stock, cloves, bay leaf, and rosemary; boil. Cover, transfer to oven, and cook until veal is tender, about 1 1/2 hours.

② Meanwhile, heat remaining lardo and butter in a 4-qt. pot over medium heat. Cut remaining carrots, celery, and onions into 1/2" pieces and add to pot along with remaining stock and potatoes; season with salt and pepper. Cover and cook until vegetables are tender, 40–45 minutes; set aside.

③ Remove veal from oven; transfer

veal to a plate. Pour sauce through a fine strainer set into a 4-qt. pot, discard solids. Set pot over medium-high heat. Add rum; cook until sauce has thickened, 12–15 minutes. To serve, slice veal, and arrange on a platter with vegetables. Spoon sauce over veal.

**Pairing note:** Full-bodied Renato Ratti Barolo Marcenasco 2006 (\$46) pairs well with this rich, hearty braise.

## TORTA DI SANT'ANTONIO

Sant'Antonio Apple Tart

SERVES 8

Cooks in the Alpine village of Oulx

**Zest of 1 orange**

- 1 egg white, lightly beaten

① In a bowl, whisk together flour, 1 tbsp. sugar, and baking soda; rub butter into flour until pea-size crumbles form. In a bowl, whisk together milk and yolks; mix with a fork into flour. Transfer to a floured surface; knead into a ball; wrap in plastic wrap and chill for 1 hour.

② Bring remaining sugar, wine, cinnamon, apples, salt, and orange zest to a boil in a 4-qt. pan over medium-high heat. Reduce heat to medium-low; simmer until wine is reduced to a syrup, 25–30 minutes; let cool.

③ Heat oven to 375°. Transfer dough to a floured surface; roll out to 1/8" thickness. Transfer dough to an 11" tart pan with a removable bottom; press into bottom and sides. Trim dough edges; reserve scraps. Transfer apple mixture to pan; fold dough sides over edges. (To make garnish: roll dough scraps to 1/8" thickness. Cut out leaf and grape shapes; arrange on top.) Brush dough with egg white; sprinkle with sugar. Bake until golden, 25–30 minutes.

## LA TARTE

(Vanilla-Rum Custard)

SERVES 8–10

Take this custard (pictured on page 72) out of the refrigerator about 10 minutes before serving.

- 3/4 cup sugar
- 1/2 tsp. kosher salt
- 4 eggs, beaten
- 1 vanilla bean, seeds scraped and reserved
- 4 cups heavy cream
- 5 tbsp. light rum

Heat oven to 300°. In a bowl, whisk together sugar, salt, eggs, and vanilla. Whisk in cream and rum. Transfer mixture to a 3-qt. baking dish; set inside a roasting pan. Put pan on oven rack; pour boiling water into pan to come halfway up sides of dish. Bake until slightly loose in center, 40–50 minutes. Remove dish from pan; chill until set.

flavor this tart (pictured on page 68) with red wine and cinnamon to honor the town's patron saint, Sant'Antonio.

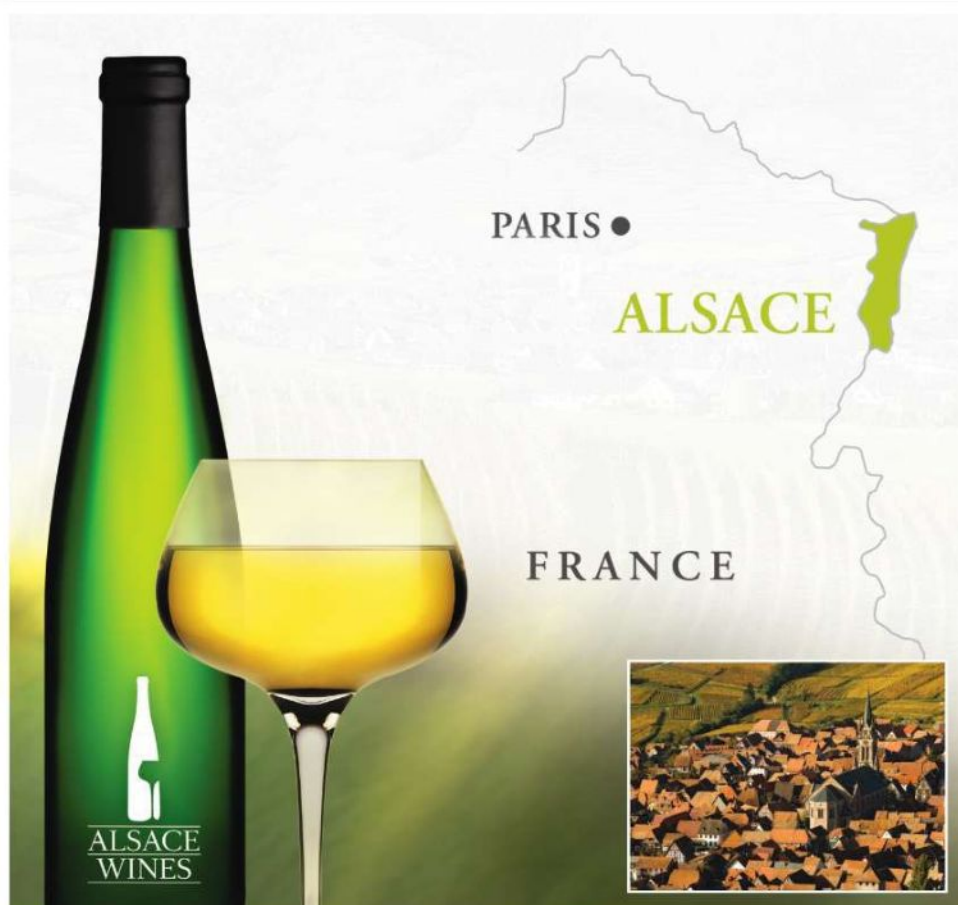
- 2 cups flour
- 7 tbsp. sugar, plus more
- 1 tsp. baking soda
- 6 tbsp. unsalted butter, cut into 1/2" cubes, chilled
- 1/4 cup milk
- 2 egg yolks
- 1 1/2 cups red wine
- 1/4 tsp. ground cinnamon
- 4 Granny Smith apples, peeled, cored, and thinly sliced
- 1/4 tsp. kosher salt



THIS HOLIDAY SEASON

**DISCOVER ALSACE WINES**

JUST ADD FOOD!



Enter the picturesque wine region of Alsace, where the vineyards' grapes ripen perfectly in steady sunlight that's not often interrupted.

The resultant wines of Alsace are aromatic and rich with fruit, spice and minerals, yet they maintain a beautiful spine of acidity due to their northern latitude and cooler climate. Unlike those from other regions of France, Alsace wines state not only the village from which they are made, but also the varietal (grape) right on the label too. Those you're most likely to encounter come from the region's noble varietals of Riesling, Pinot Blanc, Pinot Gris, and Gewurztraminer; there's also the region's fantastic signature sparkling wine, Crémant d'Alsace.

All are perfect with a wide variety of cuisines and ideal for the eclectic spread of holiday celebrations. While Alsace is famous for foodstuffs such as pungent Munster cheese and tarte flambée, its wines really shine with diverse seasonal pairings.

For more information on these pairings and Alsace wines visit [JustAddFood.com](http://JustAddFood.com).



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**SAVORY SNACKS**

For a simple, clever and festive gift to the host, bring Crémant d'Alsace and a bag of popcorn. The fruity and elegant bubbles are surprisingly delicious with the easy-to-make snack tossed with butter and salt.

**PAIR WITH  
CRÉMANT D'ALSACE**

**FRESH SHELLFISH**

A bit drier, driven by more luscious fruit, Alsace Riesling is a must-have accompaniment if a shellfish spread, including oysters and crabs, are served.

**PAIR WITH  
ALSACE RIESLING**

**SMOKED SALMON**

When the smoked salmon lands on the table, so should Alsace Pinot Blanc! Fresh, supple and well-balanced, this fits nicely alongside the fish with toast and cream cheese.

**PAIR WITH  
ALSACE PINOT BLANC**

**HOLIDAY ROAST**

Round and opulent with delicate fruit, Alsace Pinot Gris is outstanding with the classic holiday roast turkey. To play up the wine's richer aspects, try it with a leek-and-mushroom stuffing.

**PAIR WITH  
ALSACE PINOT GRIS**

**SPICY DISHES**

Aromatic, slightly spicy and lychee-fruited, Alsace Gewurztraminer's hint of sweetness nicely contrasts spicy dishes. For an easy and global-inspired appetizer, serve it with spicy pork potstickers or lettuce wraps.

**PAIR WITH  
ALSACE  
GEWURZTRAMINER**



# Unpatti ke Kampus P arana Pemers

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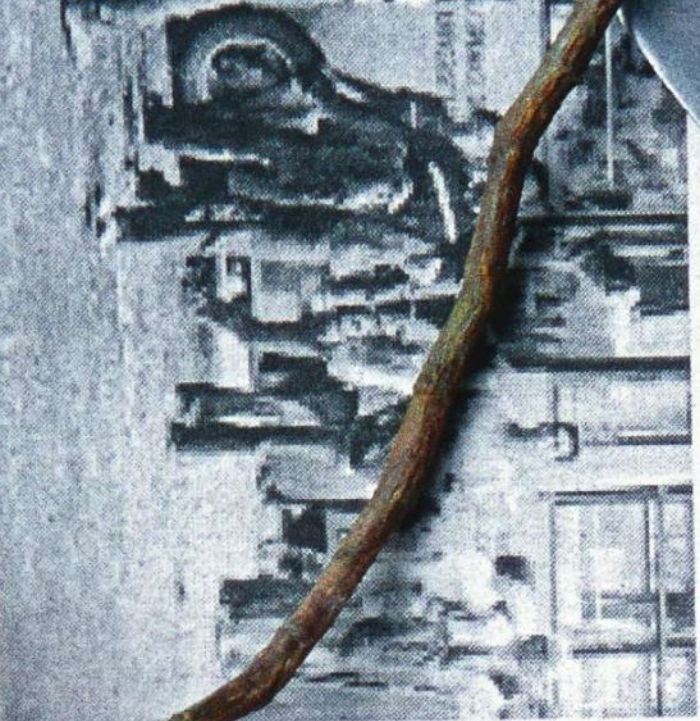
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(**The Spice Chronicles: The third**  
in a series celebrating everyday spices)

## Sweetness and Light

Nutmeg evokes  
the exotic—and the  
familiar

By Beth Kracklauer

**I** SAW MY FIRST NUTMEG tree in Trinidad, from the window of a moving car. I immediately told my boyfriend, who was driving, to hit the brakes. The tree was spectacular, maybe 20 feet tall, with a canopy of glossy leaves and a riot of pale-yellow fruits bending the branches. More of those fruits lay all over the ground, and most of them had burst open to reveal a seed the size of a walnut, encased in a web of red fibers. Our friend Nigel, who grew up on the island, was with us, and he laughed as I snatched up one of the fruits and held it to my nose. “It’s nutmeg,” he said. Suddenly I understood that the musky jam I’d eaten at breakfast that morning wasn’t spiced with nutmeg; it was made of it.

From that moment on I noticed nutmeg trees all over that part of the island, and nutmeg in everything I ate and drank. It was the high note in the sweet potato cake called pone, and the earthy counterpoint to the Scotch bonnet chiles in a soup of beef, taro, and yam. Tasting the island’s spicy, custardy version of macaroni and cheese, I realized I’d been eating nutmeg in cheesy, eggy, and creamy dishes all my life; it was both familiar and a total mystery to me.

APTLY DUBBED *Myristica fragrans* (“musky scent”) by some long-ago botanist, nutmeg grows on a number of islands in the Carib-

A fresh nutmeg fruit cut in half: the kernel of the seed is the spice we know as nutmeg; the red web is the mace.



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bean—Trinidad's neighbor Grenada, which until recently produced 20 percent of the world's supply, proudly displays nutmeg on its flag—yet it's a relatively new arrival to that part of the world. The tree is indigenous to the Banda Islands in what is today the Indonesian province of Maluku, also known as the Moluccas Islands, and Indonesia still produces the majority of the world's nutmeg. For millennia it grew only in Banda, which made the two spices it produces—nutmeg, the seed's kernel, and mace (see "Nutmeg's Other Half," page 82), the red web covering it—a rare and hard-won commodity. Nutmeg arrived fashionably late to the European table—after the turn of the 11th century, far later than, say, pepper or cardamom—and its novelty only intensified its allure.

Along the medieval spice route, every time nutmeg changed hands—from Bandanese producers to Arab traders, from Byzantine spice merchants to Venetian ones—somebody profited, and nutmeg's price increased exponentially. In the late 16th and early 17th centuries, when physicians began prescribing nutmeg as a cure for the plague, the price spiked even higher—one small sack of nutmeg represented enough capital to purchase a house in London and a servant, too—and the newly formed Dutch and English East India companies waged a ruthless struggle for control of the Moluccas. The Dutch prevailed, at least for a time. An 18th-century French adventurer named Pierre Poivre is credited with breaking the Dutch monopoly by smuggling seedlings out of the Moluccas and replanting them on the island of Mauritius, and as nutmeg plantations proliferated in Sri Lanka, Zanzibar, and the West Indies, the price of the spice plummeted.

At the same time, highly spiced dishes, the ultimate status symbol during the medieval period, were falling out of vogue across Europe, though nutmeg retained a certain cachet in part because of its narcotic properties. Myristicin, the chemical compound that gives nutmeg much of its pungency, also produces euphoria and even hallucinations at high doses, and the spice was used recreationally. Grated liberally over the punch served up by the gallon in 18th- and early-19th-century England, nutmeg was blamed for some of the most outrageous behavior associated with that potent drink. Lord Byron used the spice recreationally, as did Malcolm X, a century and a half later, while doing time in a Massachusetts prison. "Stirred into a glass of cold water," he







recalled, “a penny matchbox full of nutmeg had the kick of three or four reefers.”

THESE DAYS, NUTMEG’S reputation is a lot more wholesome. There are those who wait until Christmas to haul out the tin of nutmeg powder and shake it over eggnog. In fact, most of us consume more nutmeg than we realize, in everything from quiche Lorraine to Coca-Cola. I asked John Wright, a flavorist who’s created essences for firms like New York-based International Flavors & Fragrances for more than 40 years, what accounts for the spice’s enduring popularity. “Nutmeg has a long history of use in food destined for young children,” he told me. “At that age the brain is forming most of its connections, and nutmeg becomes hardwired as a permanent preference. One weapon in the arsenal of a wily flavorist is the addition of just a trace of nutmeg oil to the most unlikely flavors.” Nutmeg, for instance, is typically used in the creation of berry flavors.

That’s how I like to use nutmeg in the kitchen: in an almost subliminal way. It can overwhelm if used in excess, but nutmeg has a remarkable capacity to enhance other flavors. It’s best known as a baking ingredient in cakes, pies, and cookies. In a British custard tart, nutmeg’s subtle floral qualities come to the fore thanks to a dash of fragrant vanilla. While its flavor blooms in buttery sweets, the spice also thrives in savory foods. In Italy, nutmeg is used to take the metallic edge off of leafy greens, in dishes like the ricotta-and-spinach dumplings called *malfatti*. I love the version that Anna Klinger makes at the restaurant Al Di Là, in Brooklyn, New York. She uses Swiss chard in place of spinach, and its sweetness echoes that of the nutmeg she grates in.

It’s in drinks, above all, that nutmeg still retains some of its former exoticism. Jane Danger, a bartender at the bar Cienfuegos in Manhattan, uses nutmeg in her Cayo Romano rum cocktail (see page 82 for a recipe), to round out the heat of ginger liqueur. “I always grate it fresh,” she says; nutmeg’s oils are highly volatile, so the preground stuff loses its verve pretty quickly. The Cayo Romano is an update on the rum punches still served with a generous sprinkling of nutmeg throughout the Caribbean, a potent reminder that both rum and nutmeg once fueled the building of empires. 🦋

**Clockwise from top left: nutmeg cake; nutmeg custard tart; nutmeg doughnuts; and ricotta and Swiss chard dumplings (see pages 82–84 for recipes).**



## NUTMEG CAKE

SERVES 8-10

While nutmeg adds a subtle note to many desserts, it claims center stage in this traditional spiced Armenian cake (pictured on page 80). We based this recipe on one in *A World of Cake* by Krystina Castella (Storey Publishing, 2010). For a source for cake stencils, see page 134.

- 12 **tbsp. unsalted butter, cubed, plus more for pan**
- 3 **cups flour, plus more for pan**
- 4 1/2 **tsp. freshly grated nutmeg**
- 2 **tsp. baking powder**
- 1 **tsp. ground cinnamon**
- 3/4 **tsp. baking soda**
- 1/2 **tsp. kosher salt**
- 2 **cups packed light brown sugar**
- 1 1/2 **cups sour cream**
- 1 **cup milk**
- 2 **eggs, beaten**
- 1/2 **cup finely chopped walnuts**
- Confectioners' sugar, for dusting**

Heat oven to 350°. Butter and flour a 5" x 12" cake pan; set aside. In a food processor, combine flour, nutmeg, baking powder, cinnamon, baking soda, and salt; pulse to combine. Add butter and pulse until pea-size crumbs form. Add brown sugar, sour cream, milk, and eggs; process until smooth. Add walnuts; stir in with a rubber spatula. Transfer batter to prepared pan; smooth top. Bake until a toothpick inserted into center of cake comes out clean, 45-50 minutes. Transfer to a rack; let cool. To serve, unmold cake, top with a cake stencil, and dust top with confectioners' sugar. Remove stencil; cut into squares to serve.

## CAYO ROMANO COCKTAIL

MAKES 1 COCKTAIL

Freshly grated nutmeg rounds out the flavor of this shaken rum-and-citrus juice cocktail from Cienfuegos, a bar in New York City.

- 1 **oz. dark aged rum**
- 1 **oz. silver rum**
- 1 **oz. ginger liqueur, such as Canton**



Cayo Romano cocktail

- 3/4 **oz. fresh lime juice**
  - 3/4 **oz. fresh orange juice**
  - 1 **dash allspice pimento dram (optional; see page 134)**
  - 1 **dash Angostura bitters**
  - Freshly grated nutmeg and superfine sugar, to taste**
- Fill a cocktail shaker with 2 cups
- 1/2 **cup sugar**
  - 8 **tbsp. unsalted butter, softened**
  - 3 **eggs**
  - 2 1/2 **cups flour**
  - 1/4 **tsp. kosher salt**
  - 2 2/3 **cups heavy cream**

cracked ice. Add all ingredients, cover, and shake vigorously for 10-15 seconds until chilled. Strain cocktail and serve up in a chilled highball glass.

## NUTMEG CUSTARD TARTS

SERVES 8

Creamy and spicy, these classic English custard tarts (pictured on page 81) boast all the hallmarks of our favorite egg-nogs. We based this recipe on one

- 2/3 **cup milk**
- 2 **tsp. freshly grated nutmeg, plus more for garnish**
- 1/2 **vanilla bean, seeds scraped and reserved**
- 1/2 **cup packed light brown sugar**
- 4 **egg yolks**

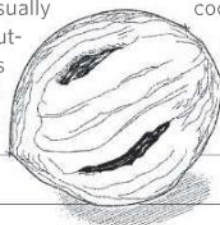
1 Make the pastry: In a large bowl, beat together sugar and butter with a hand mixer on medium-high speed until light and fluffy, 1-2 minutes. Add 1 lightly beaten egg and beat until smooth. Add flour and salt and mix on low speed until a crumbly dough forms. Transfer to a lightly floured work surface and flatten dough into a disk; divide disk into 4 equal portions and flatten each portion into a disk. Working with 1 disk at a time, roll out to 1/8" thickness, transfer to a 6"-diameter 12-oz. tart tin, and transfer tin to a baking sheet; repeat with remaining disks and tins. Trim edges and lightly prick bottoms with tines of a fork; refrigerate for 1 hour.

2 Heat oven to 375°. Line each tin with a parchment paper circle and fill with dried beans or pie weights; bake until just set, 15 minutes. Remove weights and parchment and continue baking tart shells until the edges are golden brown, 12-15 minutes more. Transfer tins to a wire rack and let tart shells cool. Reduce oven temperature to 300°.

3 Make the filling: Heat cream, milk, nutmeg, and vanilla seeds in a 2-qt. saucepan over medium-high heat until it begins to simmer; remove from heat. In a large bowl, whisk together remaining eggs, brown sugar, and egg

## NUTMEG'S OTHER HALF

Mace is the waxy red web—technically, an aril—that encases the nutmeg seed. An extension of the seed stalk that transfers nutrients from fruit to seed, the aril is high in myristicin, the same fragrant compound that in high doses has a narcotic effect on humans and is toxic to bugs (an obvious evolutionary advantage in the tropics). To birds, though, the mace's come-hither shade of red is beguilingly attractive, and so the seeds travel and the tree proliferates. Usually dried and sold in shards called blades, mace is more fragile than nutmeg, and more expensive. You can buy it ground up, but mace loses its pungency quickly once pulverized. Lior Lev Secarz, who owns the online spice shop La Boîte à Épices and creates custom spice blends



for chefs including Daniel Boulud and Eric Ripert, buys arils that are largely intact. "Mace has more citrus notes, more floral notes than nutmeg does," he says. "I use it in a fresh blend, something with bright herbs and spices." Secarz's antecedents, the spice merchants of the Middle Ages, would lure customers with blends such as Moroccan *ras el hanout*, which usually contains mace. It's also not unusual for cooks in North Africa to blend mace and paprika and infuse them in oil to create a flavor base for meat and poultry dishes. Secarz rarely grinds mace; it's very oily and can make a spice blend clump together. "I'll break the mace into chips instead," he says. "That way, you get this intermittent hit of mace as you chew. The coarse texture adds complexity." —B.K.



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*Center:* 1/2 bar (2 oz) 60% Cacao  
Bittersweet Chocolate Baking Bar  
1/4 cup heavy cream

*Cake:* Nonstick cooking spray  
1 bar (4 oz) 60% Cacao Bittersweet  
Chocolate Baking Bar  
8 Tbsp. (1 stick) unsalted butter  
2 whole eggs  
2 egg yolks  
1/3 cup sugar  
1/2 tsp. vanilla extract  
1/4 cup cake flour

Raspberries and whipped cream for garnish

To make centers, melt chocolate and cream in double boiler. Whisk gently to blend. Refrigerate about 2 hours or until firm. Form into 6 balls; refrigerate until needed.

To make cake, heat oven to 400°F. Spray six 4-ounce ramekins or custard cups with cooking spray. Melt chocolate and butter in double boiler; whisk gently to blend. With an electric mixer, whisk eggs, yolks, sugar, and vanilla on high speed about 5 minutes or until thick and light. Fold melted chocolate mixture and flour into egg mixture just until combined. Spoon cake batter into ramekins. Place a chocolate ball in the middle of each ramekin.

Bake about 15 minutes or until cake is firm to the touch. Let it sit out of the oven for about 5 minutes. Run a small, sharp knife around inside of each ramekin, place a plate on top, invert and remove ramekin. Garnish with raspberries and a dollop of whipped cream.



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yolks until smooth. Slowly add warm cream mixture, whisking constantly until smooth. Place baking sheet with tart shells on oven rack and pour custard into shells; slide rack into oven and bake until custard is set but still slightly loose in the center, 30–35 minutes. Transfer tarts to a wire rack and let cool. Chill for at least 2 hours. To serve, garnish the tarts with grated nutmeg, halve or quarter the tarts, and serve them cold or at room temperature.

## NUTMEG DOUGHNUTS

MAKES ABOUT 2 DOZEN

Buttermilk gives these old-fashioned cake doughnuts (pictured on page 81) their tangy appeal; a dusting of sugar and freshly grated nutmeg adds a spicy crunch.

- 3 1/2 cups flour
- 1 2/3 cups sugar
- 3 tbsp. freshly grated nutmeg
- 2 1/2 tsp. baking powder
- 1 tsp. kosher salt
- 3/4 tsp. baking soda
- 1 egg
- 1 egg white
- 1 cup buttermilk
- 4 tbsp. unsalted butter, melted
- Canola oil, for frying

1 In a medium bowl, whisk together flour, 2/3 cup sugar, 1 tbsp. nutmeg, baking powder, salt, and baking soda; set aside. In a bowl, whisk together egg and egg white until frothy. Whisk in buttermilk and butter. Stir buttermilk mixture into dry ingredients to form a dough. Transfer dough to a floured surface; gently roll to 1/2" thickness. Using a floured 3 1/4" round cookie cutter, cut out rounds of dough and transfer to parchment paper-lined baking sheets. Gather dough scraps, knead briefly to form a ball; flatten and cut out more rounds. Repeat until all dough is used. Using a 1 3/8" round cookie cutter, cut out center of each round. Chill doughnuts and holes for 30 minutes. Meanwhile, combine remaining sugar and nutmeg in a large paper bag; set aside.

2 Pour oil into a 6-qt. Dutch oven to

a depth of 2"; heat over medium-high heat until a deep-fry thermometer reads 325°. Working in small batches, fry doughnuts and holes, turning, until golden brown, 2–3 minutes for doughnuts and 1–2 minutes for holes. Using tongs, transfer doughnuts to a wire rack to drain. Shake doughnuts and holes in the paper bag to coat in the nutmeg-sugar.

## MALFATTI

(Ricotta and Swiss Chard Dumplings)

SERVES 4–6

Chef Anna Klingler of Al Di Là in Brook-



Nutmeg ice cream

lyn, New York, flavors these dumplings (pictured on page 80) with nutmeg. For the best results, drain the ricotta overnight and squeeze all the moisture out of the Swiss chard.

- 1 lb. ricotta
- 1 tsp. kosher salt, plus more to taste
- 4 bunches Swiss chard (about 4 lbs.), stemmed
- 16 tbsp. unsalted butter, melted
- 1/4 cup flour, plus more
- 1/2 tsp. freshly grated nutmeg
- 4 egg yolks
- 1 egg
- Freshly ground black pepper,

to taste

24 sage leaves

Freshly grated Parmesan cheese, for serving

1 Put ricotta in a cheesecloth-lined strainer set over a bowl and let drain overnight in refrigerator. Measure 1 1/4 cups drained ricotta and reserve any remaining ricotta for another use.

2 Bring a large pot of salted water to a boil and add chard; cook until soft, 3–4 minutes. Drain chard and let cool. Squeeze chard with your hands

3 Using a spoon, divide mixture into about 40 portions. Working with 1 portion at a time, use 2 spoons to shape portion into an oval and dust with flour. Transfer dumplings to a lightly floured baking sheet and repeat with remaining portions. (If not cooking immediately, cover and freeze malfatti for up to 6 months.)

4 Bring a large pot of salted water to a boil and add dumplings; cook until dumplings float, 1–2 minutes. Using a slotted spoon, transfer dumplings to a baking sheet. Meanwhile, heat remaining butter in a 10" skillet over medium-high heat, stirring occasionally, until lightly browned, about 5 minutes. Add sage and cook until leaves are crisp, 1 minute. Divide dumplings between 6 serving plates, drizzle with sage butter, and garnish with more Parmesan and nutmeg, if you like.

## NUTMEG ICE CREAM

MAKES 1 QUART

Serve this spiced ice cream (pictured at left) on its own or scooped on top of warm fruit crisps, cobblers, or pies, particularly apple.

- 2 tsp. freshly grated nutmeg
- 2 cups half-and-half
- 1 whole nutmeg, cracked
- 3/4 cup sugar
- 6 egg yolks
- 1 cup heavy cream

to expel liquid. Transfer chard to center of a tea towel, bring up edges, and squeeze to expel remaining liquid. (Alternatively, working in batches, put chard in a potato ricer and squeeze to expel liquid.) Transfer chard to a food processor and pulse until finely chopped. Transfer chard to a large bowl along with drained ricotta, 1 tsp. salt, 8 tbsp. butter, flour, nutmeg, egg yolks, and egg. Season with pepper and mix until smooth. (Test 1 dumpling: Bring a small pot of water to a boil. Measure out 1 tbsp. of mixture, roll in flour, and boil until the dumpling floats. If dumpling falls apart, stir 1/4 cup more flour into mixture.)

Toast grated nutmeg in a skillet over medium heat, 1–2 minutes. Remove pan from heat; set aside. Heat half-and-half and cracked nutmeg in a 4-qt. saucepan until it just begins to simmer. Remove from heat; let steep for 10 minutes. In a bowl, whisk together sugar and yolks. While whisking, slowly pour in half-and-half mixture. Return mixture to pan; cook, stirring, until mixture thickens, 8–10 minutes. Pour through a fine strainer into a large bowl. Whisk in toasted nutmeg and cream; cover custard and chill. Freeze custard in an ice cream maker; transfer to an airtight container. Freeze until set before serving.



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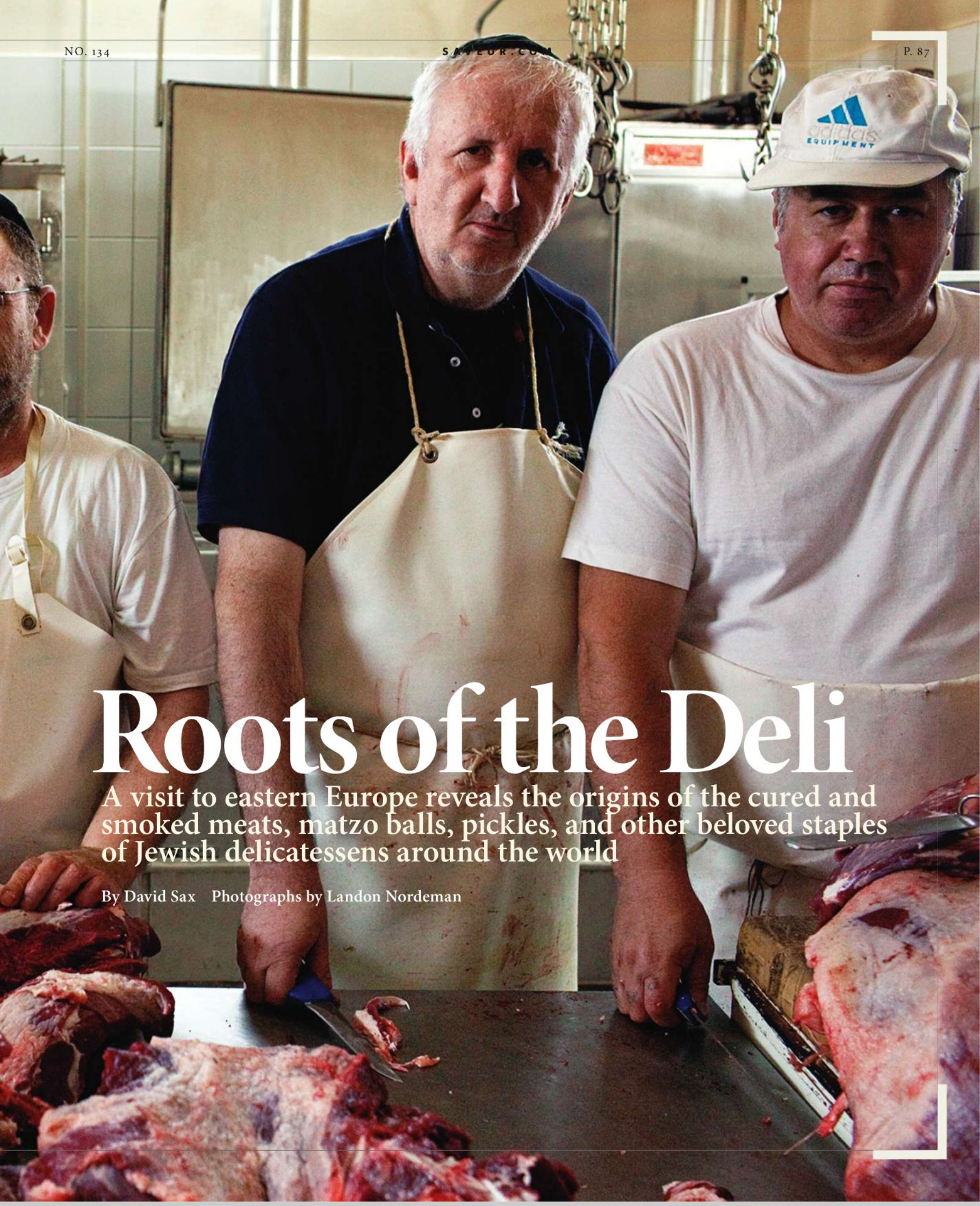
Kosher butchers Cyuri Rosenberg (center, with glasses) and Imre Rona Fleischman (navy shirt), with their staff in Budapest.



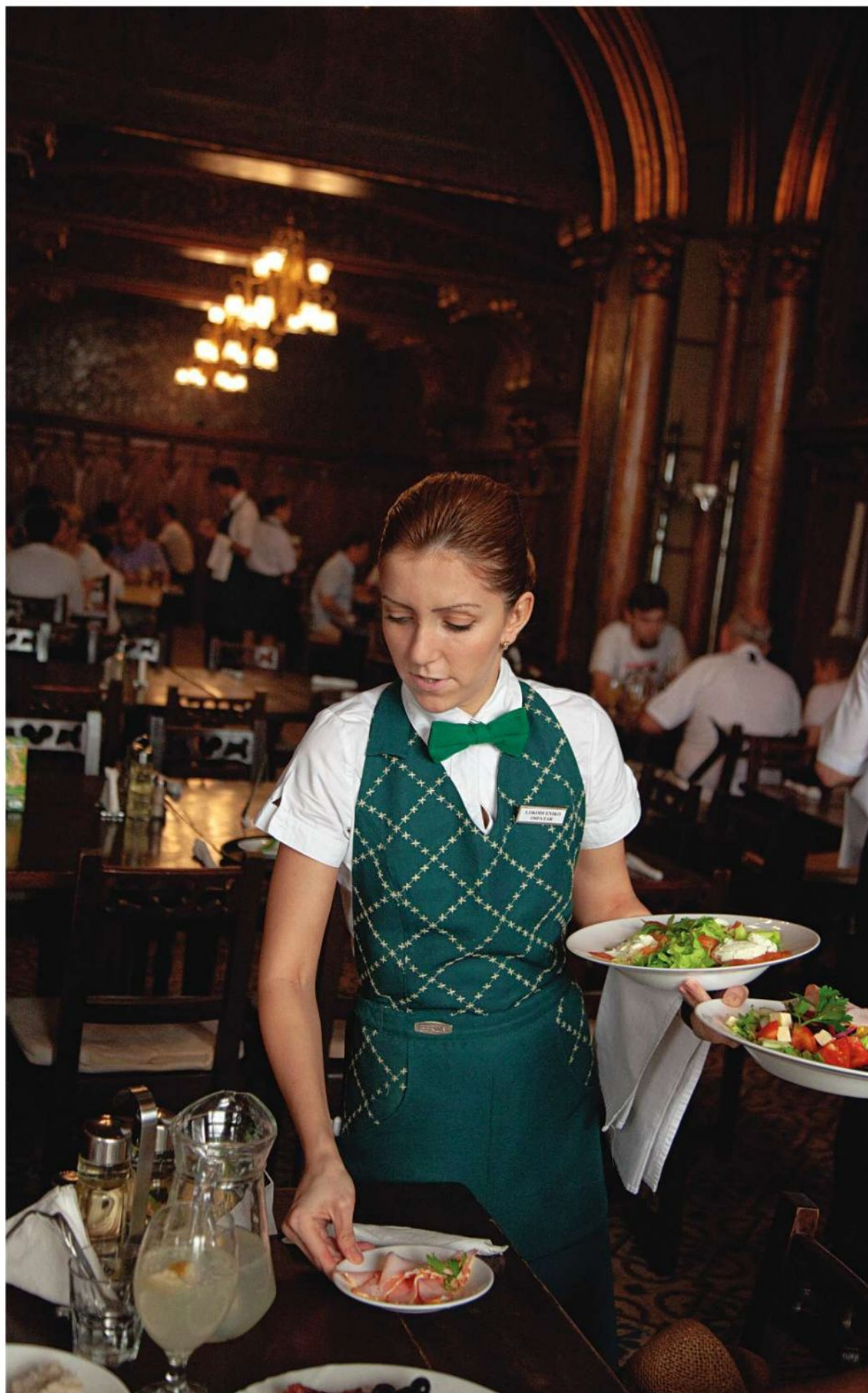
# Roots of the Deli

A visit to eastern Europe reveals the origins of the cured and smoked meats, matzo balls, pickles, and other beloved staples of Jewish delicatessens around the world

By David Sax Photographs by Landon Nordeman







GROWING UP in Toronto, my knowledge of Jewish delicatessens extended no further than Yitz's Delicatessen, my family's once-a-week staple. Yitz's was our haven of oniony matzo ball soup, briny coleslaw, and towering corned beef sandwiches; a temple of worn Formica tables, surly waitresses, and hanging salamis. The dishes I ate there became my comfort food, and as I grew older, I started seeking out other Jewish delis wherever I went: Schwartz's and Snowdon in Montreal (where I learned to appreciate the glories of smoked meat); Rascal House in Miami Beach (baskets of sticky Danish); Katz's and Carnegie and 2nd Ave Deli in New York (Pastrami! Knishes!). By the time I finished writing the book *Save the Deli*, my battle cry for preserving these timepieces, I'd visited

**I DIDN'T EXPECT  
TO FIND PASTRAMI  
SANDWICHES in  
Europe, but I hoped to  
find their inspiration**

close to two hundred Jewish delis across North America, with stops in Belgium, France, and the UK. I'd become the deli guy, the expert people came to with questions about everything from kreplach to corned beef.

But for all my knowledge of Jewish delis, the roots of the foods served there remained a mystery to me. I'd learned that the word *delicatessen* derives from German and French and loosely translates as "delicious things to eat." And I knew that when they began appearing in New York and other North American (continued on page 93)

At left, a server at Caru' cu bere in Bucharest. Facing page, matzo ball soup from Fülemüle in Budapest (see page 102 for a recipe).





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u. 5.





The family of home cook Eszter Bodrogi in early-20th-century Budapest. Facing page, apple, walnut, and poppy seed pastry (see page 107 for a recipe).











(continued from page 88) cities in the 1870s, Jewish delicatessens were little more than bare-bones kosher butcher shops offering sausages and cured meats. But as the American Jewish experience evolved away from that of eastern Europe's, so did the Jewish delicatessen's menu. Its flavors assimilated, and it turned into an American sandwich shop with a greatest-hits collection of Yiddish home-style staples: chopped liver,

DAVID SAX is the author of *Save the Deli: In Search of Perfect Pastrami, Crusty Rye, and the Heart of the Jewish Delicatessen* (Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2009). He lives in Toronto.

knishes, matzo ball soup.

A few years ago, I visited Krakow, Poland, to start seeking out the roots of those foods. Once a major center of European Jewish spiritual life, Krakow's Jewish population now numbers just a few hundred. The city's historic Jewish quarter is largely supported by tourism, and while some restaurants, like the estimable Klezmer Hois and Alef, serve up decent jellied carp and beef kreplach dumplings that any deli lover will recognize, others traffic in nostalgia and stereotypes; how could I trust the food at an eatery with a gift store selling Hasidic figurines with hooked noses?

There were once millions of

Ashkenazi Jewish kitchens in eastern Europe. The foods of the shtetls were regional, taking on local flavors, and when European Jews came to America, that variety characterized the delicatessens they opened. You got pastrami at Romanian delicatessens, frankfurters at German ones, and blintzes from the Russians. The delis were all Jewish, but their regional roots were proudly on display.

The problem with researching these roots in eastern Europe is that there aren't many Jews nowadays. The countries I visited on my last research trip are no exception; Romania has fewer than 9,000 Jews (just one percent of its pre-World War II total), and while

Hungary's population of 80,000 is the last remaining stronghold of Jewish life in the region, it's a fraction of what it once was. But I also have a personal connection to these countries: Romania was where my grandfather was born, and is the country associated with pastrami, spiced meats, and passionate Jewish carnivores. And Hungary was the land of my grandmother, with its soul-warming stews and baked goods that inspired delicatessens in America and beyond. What were Jewish cooks preparing over there, in these countries' capital cities,

**IT HITS ME THAT IT'S  
NOTHING SHORT OF  
A MIRACLE *that these  
foods, these traditions,  
have survived***

Bucharest and Budapest, respectively, and how were those foods related to the deli fare we all know and love? I didn't expect to find the checkered linoleum and big sandwiches of my childhood deli, but I hoped to find some of its original flavor and inspiration.

IN THE SUNNY kitchen of the Bucharest Jewish Home for the Aged, cook Mihaela Alupoae is preparing Friday night's Shabbat dinner for the center's residents and others in the Jewish community. Hers is the city's only public kosher kitchen. Out of the oven come gorgeous loaves of challah bread, their dough soft and

Clockwise from top left: a side dish of tomatoes and onions; a young girl with pickles and chopped liver-stuffed eggs (see page 104 for a recipe) at the Bucharest Jewish Community Center; a Budapest street scene; paprika foie gras (see page 104 for a recipe). Facing page, a guest takes some pickled tongue at the home of Rachel Raj and Miklós Maloschik.







A butcher slices *kolbasz* sausages at Budapest's kosher butcher shop.



## Meats of the Deli

The meaty appeal of most new-world Jewish delis stems from that fact that most began as kosher butcher shops. In fact, you can trace the most common deli meats—pastrami, corned beef, pickled tongue, and salami—to venerable eastern European traditions, all of which began, in part, because the practice of salting meat is a requirement of kosher certification.

The method for making pastrami dates as far back as the Byzantines, and in Romania curing meat with salt and spices remains a favorite way of dry-curing mutton and beef. Romanian Jews adopted this preparation, mainly for goose breast, which was served cold and thinly sliced as an appetizer. When Romanian Jews settled on New York's Lower East Side, beef was more plentiful and replaced goose as the protein of choice, and pastrami started to be served hot, as a sandwich, so that the local garment workers could eat it on the job. Making pastrami—from either the brisket or the navel, both tough, sinewy, cuts of beef—involves a series of processes: salting; rubbing with a mix of garlic, pepper, coriander, mustard seed, and sugar (among other seasonings); and smoking. The meat is then steamed until tender, and sliced, preferably by hand.

The tradition of making corned beef and pickled tongue likely originated in England or Ireland in medieval times; it was later adapted by Ashkenazi Jews in Germany. Briskets and whole tongues are left to marinate in salty brine infused with garlic, sugar, and bay leaf. After a week or so, the meat is removed, rinsed, and boiled until tender, then sliced hot.

The old-world meats that most closely mirror what you find in the United States are the ground-beef sausages and salamis, often made in regional styles: frankfurters in Germany, paprika-heavy *kolbasz* in Hungary, *mititei* sausage in Romania. Placed on rye bread and topped with mustard, these beautifully seasoned meats are a highlight of Jewish delis around the world. —D.S.

sweet, with a crisp crust. “The three main ingredients—air, earth, and water—are symbolic,” says Mihaela, brushing her black hair from her face. “When you braid the three strands of dough, you tie them all together.”

Because budgets are tight, bringing in prepared kosher food from abroad is impossible, so everything in Mihaela's kitchen is made from scratch. In the summer, fruit is boiled down into jams and compotes, which go into sweets year-round. In the basement of the facility there are shelves stacked with glass jars of homemade pickles—garlic-laden kosher dills, lemony artichokes, horseradish, and green tomatoes—that she serves with her meals.

Later that night, about 75 people sit down to the weekly feast in an airy auditorium at the nearby Jewish Community Center. Children gather around for the blessings over the candles, wine, and bread, as everyone noshes on the creamy chopped chicken liver Mihaela piped into the whites of hardboiled eggs. I sit with Ghizella Steiner-Ionescu and Suzy Stonescu, two talkative ladies of a certain age who regale me with tales of the Jewish food scene in Bucharest before the war. They tell me that along Văcărești Street, the community's main thoroughfare, there were dozens of bakeries, butchers, and grill houses, where skirt steaks and beef *mititei* (grilled kebab-style patties) were cooked over charcoal. Though none survived the war, I realize that these foods eventually found their way onto deli menus and inspired other Jewish restaurants in the United States, like Sammy's Roumanian Steakhouse in New York and similar steak houses in other cities (see “Deli Diaspora,” page 98).

I ask about pastrami, Romania's greatest contribution to the Jewish delicatessen. Not so much a specific dish but a method of pickling, spicing, and smoking meat

that originated with the Turks, *pastrama*, in various dishes, is still available in Romania, though none of them resemble the juicy, hand-carved, peppery navels and briskets famous at North American delis like Katz's and Langer's. Nowadays, you mostly get salted, dried beef or brined mutton. Mrs. Steiner-Ionescu and Mrs. Stonescu remember five or six pastrami places in Bucharest that mostly used duck or goose breast, though occasionally beef. The meat was cured and served cold as an appetizer—never steamed and in a sandwich; that transformation occurred in America. (See “Meats of the Deli,” at left.) It had been decades since the flavors of duck pastrami had graced their lips, the memories fading with

**AMERICAN DELIS  
WERE FIRST AND  
FOREMOST JEWISH,  
but their regional roots  
were on display**



the surviving generation.

“It's strange,” Fernando Klabin, my guide in Bucharest, said the next day. “It's as though history was erased. The Jews never existed.” In the yard of Klabin's small cottage an hour outside of Bucharest, his friend Silvia Weiss is laying out dishes on a makeshift table. Out comes a tartly sweet vinegar coleslaw, a dill-inflected mushroom salad, a tray of bite-size potato knishes she'd baked that morning. We eat *sarmale*—finger-size cab-

bage rolls filled with ground beef and sautéed onions—and each roll disappears in two bites, leaving only the sweet aftertaste of the paprika-laced *jus*. As we sit around after the meal, it hits me that it's nothing short of a miracle that these foods, these traditions, have survived.

OF ALL THE Jewish communities of eastern Europe, Budapest's is a beacon of light. There's a thriving Jewish quarter in the 7th district, where bakeries like Frölich and Café Noé serve strong espresso and *flódni*, a dense triple-layer pastry with walnuts, poppy seeds, and apple filling that's the caloric totem of Hungarian Jewish cooking. Amid centuries-old synagogues and art deco buildings pockmarked with bullet holes from the war, I encounter restaurants serving beautiful versions of beloved deli staples: Cari Mama, a bakery and pizzeria, is known for cinnamon, chocolate, and nut rugelach that disappear within hours of the shop's opening each morning.

Across the street, in a courtyard containing the Orthodox synagogue, is a restaurant called Hanna. Founded after the war as a soup kitchen for impoverished survivors of the Holocaust, it's now a community-owned center for Yiddish kosher cooking where you can get everything from matzo balls and kugel to beef goulash. With its wainscoting and chandeliers, it feels partly like a house of worship and partly like the legendary New York kosher restaurant Ratner's, complete with sarcastic waiters in tuxedo vests, and young boys in oversize black hats and long side curls, learning the art of kosher supervision.

Down a covered passageway is the Orthodox community's kosher butcher, where cuts of beef,





chicken, turkey, duck, and goose are brined in kosher salt and transformed into salamis, knockwursts, hot dogs, *kolbasz* garlic sausages, and bolognas that dry in the open air. Once upon a time, Jewish delis in America all looked like this: places to get your meats, fresh and cured, straight from the butcher's blade and the smoker. The salamis are fiery, coarse, and downright intense. In America's delis you find one type of kosher salami. Here, in Budapest, you can get dozens.

The city's Jewish restaurant scene boasts a refined side, too, which I experienced at Fülemüle, a popular place run by András Singer. On the day I visited, Singer explained to me how Jewish food culture had changed over the years. He, for example, grew up in a house where his Holocaust-

### IN THE STATES, YOU GET ONE KIND OF KOSHER SALAMI.

*In Budapest, Jewish butchers sell dozens*

survivor parents shunned Judaism. The only thing that remained of their culture was the food. His mother served *cholent* (a slow-cooked meat and bean stew) nearly every Saturday, but often with pork. "They left the religion behind," says Singer, "but kept the food. This is how it was. Until the 1990s, Jewish life was very quiet."

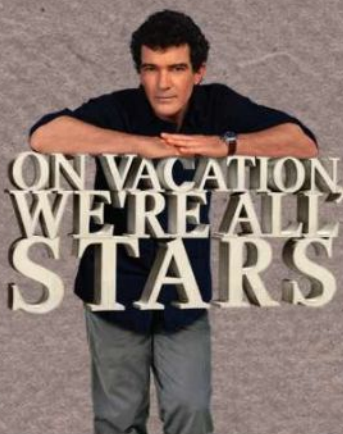
With democracy came cultural exploration and a newfound sense of Jewish pride. Singer opened his restaurant in 2000, with a focus on updated versions of Jewish classics. He serves half a dozen variations on

Clockwise from top left: potato knishes; a cattle market in 1920s Poland; lunch at Fernando Klabin's cottage near Bucharest (cabbage rolls in the foreground; see page 102 for a recipe).



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# Deli Diaspora

THE BEST DELIS IN NORTH AMERICA and western Europe offer a delicious link to the Jewish foodways of the Old World. These places are run by owners committed to keeping the flavors of the past alive and to satisfying the die-hard customers who come in asking for a side of kishke (sausage made with matzo meal, spices, and rendered fat) or a plate of *ptcha* (jellied calves' feet). The eight places below traffic not only in the Reubens and egg creams we all know, but also in unique dishes and great variety you won't find at most delis. —D.S.

**2nd Ave Deli** Its variety of Yiddish kitchen classics, as well as stellar smoked meats, makes this the quintessential Manhattan kosher deli. The 2nd Ave (which reopened in December 2007 on 33rd Street after closing in 2006) is one of the few delis in the United States to carry rolled beef, a subtly spiced, tender cold rolled pastrami. It also holds the distinction of being the only deli to serve *ptcha*, which was prized in eastern European shtetls, and will scare off all but the most devoted Yiddish gourmand. (162 East 33rd Street, New York, New York; 212/689-9000; 2ndavedeli.com)

**B&K Salt Beef Bar** In Britain, Jewish delis serve salt beef, a barrel-cured beef brisket that's brined for two weeks, boiled until soft, and hand-carved. The resulting sandwich, slathered with fiery English mustard, is thicker and softer than American corned beef, and B&K, which opened in the mid-1960s, has undoubtedly the finest in London. It also makes pickled tongue that's unbelievably tender. (11 Lanson House, Whitchurch Lane, London, England; 020/8952-8204)

**Brent's Delicatessen** A favorite in the San Fernando Valley for its homemade kishke, beef intestine filled with schmaltz and matzo meal, then broiled until it's brown, crackling, and gloriously greasy; it's a sausage that derives from Jewish cooks' kosher adaptation of a Slavic blood sausage. Of all the kishkes in all the delis around the world, this one is a league apart. (19565 Parthenia Street, Northridge, California; 818/886-5679; brentsdeli.com)

**Gottlieb's Delicatessen** This *glatt* kosher delicatessen in the Williamsburg section of Brooklyn is run by the third generation of the Gottlieb family, who are mem-

bers of the Hungarian Satmar dynasty of Hasidim, the most fervently religious and insular of Orthodox Jews. That traditionalism finds its way into the food, including an unparalleled variety of kugel (baked puddings), from sweet noodle to apple, and Gottlieb's famous *cholent*: a stick-to-your-ribs stew of beef, potato, and beans. (352 Roebling Street, Brooklyn, New York; 718/384-6612)

**Maison David Charcutier** Michel Kalifa is an artist with kosher meats, interpreting the traditions of Yiddish cooking with French flair. At his 93-year-old shop (originally owned by a Polish immigrant named David Cohen), you'll find silky cured goose breast, air-dried veal that tastes like prosciutto, chopped liver laced with foie gras, salamis thin as pencils and others thick as baseball bats. (6 rue des Ecoiffes, Paris, France; 014/278-1576)

**Romanian Kosher Sausage Co.** In Chicago—a town known for its sausages—this store in Rogers Park is beloved by religious Jews and religiously devout salami eaters. Deli meats still retain their original

national styles, including Polish hot dogs and Hungarian salamis, fired up with paprika. (7200 North Clark Street, Chicago, Illinois; 773/761-4141)

**Sammy's Roumanian Steakhouse** Once, there were dozens of Romanian Jewish steak houses around America, but 35-year-old Sammy's, on New York City's Lower East Side, is the last of its kind: a carnivore's temple done up in wood veneer, with a syrup jar of chicken schmaltz sitting on each table. Hard-to-find delicacies include *karnatzlach*, a charbroiled beef-and-

garlic sausage, and *gribenes*, pieces of chicken skin, fried in chicken fat, that are the perfect accompaniment to Sammy's chopped liver with fried onions and shredded radish. (157 Chrystie Street, New York, New York; 212/673-0330)

**Schwartz's** Famous as a temple of Montreal smoked meat, 82-year-old Schwartz's is less well known for being the one remaining delicatessen in North America to brine, spice, and smoke duck and geese according to Romania's original pastrami tradition. The birds are available only by custom order, but the results—spicy, smoky, crisp, and tender—are well worth the effort. (3895 Saint-Laurent Boulevard, Montreal, Quebec, Canada; 514/842-4813; schwartzsdeli.com)



A counterperson at Schwartz's in Montreal, Canada.

*cholent*, a dish that, like matzo ball soup, is eaten all over Hungary by Jews and non-Jews alike. He's also fond of goose, once the principal protein of eastern European Jewish cooking but practically nonexistent in American Jewish kitchens. Singer's matzo balls, served in a dark goose broth, are made from crushed whole sheets of matzo mixed with goose fat, egg, and a touch of ginger, lending a lively zing. Every other matzo ball I'd ever eaten originated with packaged matzo meal. Crumbling the matzo by hand, a timeworn method abandoned in America, turns each bite into a surprise of random textures.

A JEWISH FOOD revival was a plot point I hadn't expected to discover in Budapest, and it made me think of deli fare in an entirely new light. Back home, Jewish food is frozen in the past: at best, it's the homemade classics; at worst, it's processed corned beef, overly refined "rye bread," and packaged soup mix. But here the cuisine is exciting, dynamic, and utterly refined. I encountered restaurant owners, bakers, food writers, and bloggers who have been breathing new life into dishes that nearly disappeared during Communism.

One night, in the tiny apartment of food blogger Eszter Bodrogi, I watch as she bastes goose liver with rendered fat and sweet paprika until the lobes sizzle and brown. Since 2007, Bodrogi has been chronicling her adventures in kosher cooking on her blog, *Spice and Soul*. Though initially worried that a Jewish food blog would attract anti-Semitic comments (the far right is resurgent in Hungary), the somewhat shy Eszter now courts 3,000 daily visits online, to a fan base that is largely not Jewish. "People connected with me on a personal level," she says, as she slices the liver and lays it on bread. "The food helped humanize Jews in their eyes."

She hands me a plate. For liver





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lovers it's sheer nirvana, at once melty and silken. It's this elegant face of Jewish cooking that has largely vanished in North America. At a deli in New York, you'll get a scoop of delicious chopped chicken liver, but never something this gorgeous, this fatty, this fresh and decadent. Never goose.

The next night, at the apartment of Miklós Maloschik and his wife, Rachel Raj, tradition once again meets Hungary's new Jewish culinary vanguard. Twenty-nine-

**Rachel Raj preparing dinner in her kitchen in Budapest.**

year-old Raj (pronounced Ray) is Hungary's equivalent of her American counterpart: a high-octane food television host who had a show on Hungary's food channel called *Rachel Asztala*, or Rachel's Table. The couple own and operate the hip bakeries Café Noé and Bulldog, both built on the success of Rachel's *flódni* (reputed to be the best in town).

In the kitchen, Miklós doles out shots of *pálinka*, homemade fruit brandy, the first of many on this long, spirited evening. The table fills with a mix of foods, some familiar to Jewish deli lovers

(salmon gefilte fish, potato kugel, pickled and smoked tongue with horseradish), others that were part of deli's forgotten roots, like roast duck, and the "Jewish Egg": balls of hardboiled egg, sautéed onion, and goose liver.

It's a meal that tastes thousands of miles away from those I've had at Jewish delis, and yet there's laughter, good Yiddish cooking, and a table full of Jews who hours before were strangers but now act like family. It may not be pastrami on rye, but it pretty damn well captures the heart of the Jewish delicatessen. 🐔

## THE GUIDE

### Bucharest and Budapest

*Dinner for two with drinks and tip*  
**Inexpensive** Under \$10 **Moderate** \$10–\$60 **Expensive** Over \$60

#### BUCHAREST, ROMANIA

##### Where to Stay

**Rembrandt Hotel Smârdan 11** (40/21/313-9315; [rembrandt.ro](http://rembrandt.ro)). *Rates: \$110–\$150 double.* A small, well-run boutique hotel, with spacious rooms and all the necessary AV features (wi-fi/cable), in the happening heart of the old city.

##### Where to Eat

**Caru' cu bere Strada Stavropoleos 5** (40/21/313-7560; [carucubere.ro](http://carucubere.ro)). *Moderate.* This Gothic cathedral of a beer hall, complete with dark wood, frescoes, and freshly brewed pilsner, serves some of the best grilled *mici* sausage and lamb *pastrama* in Bucharest.

#### BUDAPEST, HUNGARY

##### Where to Stay

**Continental Hotel Zara Dobány utca 42-44** (36/1/815-1000; [continentalhotelzara.com/en](http://continentalhotelzara.com/en)). *Doubles from \$77.* This new hotel brings luxury to Budapest's Jewish quarter with an expansive marble lobby (formerly a bathhouse), flat-screen TVs, a fitness center, and a rooftop lawn with lounge chairs.

##### Where to Eat

**Café Noé Wesselényi 13** (36/1/787-3842; [torta.hu](http://torta.hu)). *Inexpensive.* This coffee shop and bakery serves what is widely reputed to be the finest *flódni* in all of Hungary, along with coffees, cakes, and other pastries.

**Hanna Dob utca 35** (36/1/342-1072; [kosherhanna.hu](http://kosherhanna.hu)). *Moderate.* A community-owned institution for more than half a century, this *glatt* kosher restaurant serves Yiddish standards like noodle kugel and *cholent*, as well as kosher Hungarian specialties like beef goulash. Don't miss the kosher butcher and sausage maker located next to the rear entrance of the courtyard.

**Fülemüle Kofarago utca 5** (36/1/266-7947; [fulemule.hu](http://fulemule.hu)). *Moderate.* One of the finest Jewish restaurant experiences in the world, with highlights like "Jewish Egg" (chopped egg with goose liver), *cholent* with smoked meat, and matzo balls in goose soup.





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**CHOLENT***(Beef Stew)*

SERVES 6-8

The recipe for this slow-cooked dish of beans, brisket, and vegetables (pictured on page 106) was inspired by one that András Singer serves at Fülemlé, his restaurant in Budapest.

- 1/2 lb. dried lima beans
- 1/2 lb. dried kidney beans
- 2 tbsp. schmaltz (chicken or goose fat) or canola oil
- 1 2-lb. piece trimmed beef brisket
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste
- 6 cloves garlic, crushed
- 2 onions, chopped
- 1 tbsp. sweet paprika
- 1 lb. beef marrow bones (optional)
- 2 cups roughly chopped whole peeled canned tomatoes
- 1/2 cup pearl barley
- 5 medium Yukon Gold potatoes, peeled and quartered
- 4 whole eggs (optional)
- 2 parsnips, peeled and cut into 1" pieces
- 2 carrots, peeled and cut into 1" pieces
- Flat-leaf parsley leaves, for garnish

① Put beans into a 4-qt. saucepan and cover with 2" water. Bring to a boil and cook for 1 minute. Skim any scum from surface and drain beans; set aside.

② Heat oven to 325°. Heat schmaltz in a 6-qt. Dutch oven over medium-high heat. Season brisket with salt and pepper; add to pot and cook, turning, until well browned, about 8 minutes. Transfer beef to a plate. Add garlic, onions, and paprika to pot and cook, stirring, until onions are soft, about 10 minutes. Add the reserved beans, the beef, marrow bones, tomatoes, barley, potatoes, eggs (in the shell), parsnips, carrots, and 8 cups water to cover; season with salt and pepper and bring liquid to a simmer. Cover pot and transfer to oven. Bake until beef

is tender, about 2 1/2 hours. To serve, transfer beef to a cutting board and cut into pieces. Remove eggs; peel and chop. Divide beef and eggs between 6 serving bowls and spoon stew into bowls. Garnish with parsley.

**Pairing note:** Smoky Lioco Indica 2008 from Mendocino (\$20) complements the spicy, earthy flavors of this dish.

**SARMALE***(Stuffed Cabbage)*

SERVES 6

We've adapted this recipe by using fresh cabbage leaves rather than the more traditional pickled cabbage. To add a pleasant sourness to the dish (pictured on page 96), top the stuffed cabbage in the pot with 2 cups sauerkraut before baking, if you like.

- Kosher salt, to taste
- 1 large head green cabbage, cored
- 1/2 cup long-grain rice
- 2 tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil
- 1/2 white onion, minced
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- 4 tbsp. chopped fresh dill
- 1 1/2 tbsp. dried bread crumbs
- 1/2 tbsp. sweet paprika
- 1/4 tsp. crushed red chile flakes
- 12 oz. ground beef
- Freshly ground black pepper, to taste
- 2 cups sauerkraut, rinsed (optional)
- 8 sprigs fresh thyme
- 6 strips bacon (optional)
- 4 bay leaves
- 1 28-oz. can whole peeled tomatoes, undrained and crushed
- 1/2 cup chicken stock

① Bring a large pot of salted water to a boil. Add cabbage and cook, pulling off each outer leaf with tongs as it becomes tender, about 2 minutes per leaf. Transfer cabbage leaves to a baking sheet; set aside and continue boiling cabbage until you have 20 leaves.

② Bring 2 cups water to a boil in a

4-qt. saucepan. Add rice and boil for 10 minutes. Drain rice; set aside. Heat oil in a 10" skillet over medium heat. Add onions and garlic and cook, stirring, until soft, about 8 minutes. Transfer onion mixture to a bowl along with the rice and let cool slightly. Add 1 tbsp. dill, bread crumbs, paprika, and chile flakes. Stir to combine. Using your hands, fold in beef and season with salt and pepper; set filling aside.

③ Heat oven to 375°. Set aside 4 whole cabbage leaves. Working with remaining cabbage leaves one at a time, stem each leaf and cut leaf into 4" square pieces. Repeat to make twenty-eight 4" square pieces. Spoon 1 tbsp. of reserved filling onto center of a square. Bring up 1 edge of square and roll into a cylinder, tucking in sides. Transfer stuffed cabbage to a 6-qt. Dutch oven. Repeat with remaining leaves and filling, arranging stuffed cabbage in a circular pattern in pot as you go. Finely chop any remaining cabbage; set aside. Top stuffed cabbage with remaining dill, along with sauerkraut, thyme, bacon, and bay leaves. Top with minced cabbage leaves and tomatoes and pour in stock and 1/2 cup water. Cover with the reserved whole cabbage leaves. Bring to a boil over medium-high heat. Cover, transfer to oven, and bake until stuffed cabbage is tender and flavors meld, about 2 hours. Let cool slightly before serving.

**Pairing note:** Sharp, ripe Ramnista Ktima Kir-Yianni 2006 (\$30), a red xinomavro from Macedonia, matches the bold flavors in this dish.

**KNAIDELACH***(Matzo Balls and Goose Soup)*

SERVES 12

The recipe for this comforting soup (pictured on page 89) is based on one from Budapest chef András Singer, who crumbles matzo to make his matzo balls, giving them a striated texture. We found that using baking powder makes them even more springy and airy.

- 1 8-lb. whole goose or two 4-lb. chickens, cut into 6 pieces
- 8 cremini or button mushrooms
- 6 Brussels sprouts
- 3 carrots, cut into 2" pieces
- 2 large onions, quartered
- 2 ribs celery, cut into 2" pieces
- 2 cloves garlic, crushed
- 2 sprigs parsley, plus 1/3 cup minced parsley leaves
- 1 large turnip, quartered
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 5 matzo crackers (about 6 oz.)
- 1/2 cup plus 2 tbsp. melted schmaltz
- 4 eggs, beaten
- 1 tbsp. baking powder
- 1 tsp. ground ginger

① Put goose in a large pot and cover with water. Bring to a boil and skim fat from surface. Add mushrooms, Brussels sprouts, carrots, onions, celery, garlic, parsley sprigs, and turnip and season with salt and pepper. Reduce heat to medium-low and simmer, adding a little water, as necessary, to keep goose covered and skimming fat from surface, for 3 hours.

② Set a fine strainer over a large pot and strain stock, reserving liquid and solids. Transfer goose parts to a platter; let cool. Transfer mushrooms, Brussels sprouts, and carrots to a plate, discarding the other vegetables, and let cool. Shred goose meat, discarding skin and bones, and add to stock. Julienne the reserved vegetables; return to stock. Season soup with salt and pepper; set over low heat.

③ Meanwhile, make the matzo balls: Put matzo in a food processor and pulse until coarsely ground; set aside. Beat together schmaltz and eggs in a large bowl; add baking powder and ginger; season with salt and pepper. Add reserved ground matzo and remaining parsley; mix vigorously with a wooden spoon until stiff; cover with plastic wrap; refrigerate for 30 minutes.





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4 Bring a large pot of lightly salted water to a boil. Using wet hands, divide matzo mixture into 24 portions and roll into balls about 1" in diameter. Working in 2 batches, add matzo balls to pot, bring water to a boil, and reduce heat to medium. Cover and simmer until matzo balls are tender and doubled in size, about 20 minutes. To serve, divide soup and matzo balls between 12 bowls.

### PAPRIKÁS LIBAMÁJ

(Paprika Foie Gras on Toast)

SERVES 8

Eszter Bodrogi fries goose liver in paprika-spiced goose fat. Our adaptation of the dish (pictured on page 93) calls for duck foie gras.

- 1 **duck foie gras (about 2 lbs.), lobes separated and trimmed**  
Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste
- $\frac{1}{3}$  **cup rendered duck fat**
- 1 **tbsp. sweet paprika**
- 8 **slices country-style bread, toasted**  
Coarse sea salt, for garnish

Season foie gras with salt and pepper. Heat duck fat in an 8" skillet over medium-high heat until hot but not smoking. Add foie gras and cook, flipping once, until browned, about 6 minutes. Transfer foie gras to a medium bowl. Remove pan from heat and stir in paprika. Pour hot paprika mixture over liver and let sit until liver warms through, about 5 minutes. Transfer foie gras to a cutting board and slice lengthwise into  $\frac{1}{4}$ "-thick slices. Put 2 slices of foie gras on each piece of toast and spoon some of the paprika mixture over top. Season with salt and pepper and serve warm.

### KARTOFL KNISH

(Potato Knish)

MAKES 64 MINI KNISHES

We learned about these miniature savory knishes (pictured on page 96) from Bucharest home cook and kosher caterer Silvia Weiss.

- 4 **cups flour**
- 1 **tsp. kosher salt, plus more to taste**
- 6 **tbsp. canola oil, plus more for greasing**
- 4 **russet potatoes (2  $\frac{1}{2}$  lbs.), peeled and cut into 1" pieces**
- 3 **onions, minced**  
Freshly ground black pepper, to taste
- 1 **egg, beaten with 1 tbsp. water**

1 Whisk together flour and 1 tsp. salt in a medium bowl. Make a well in center and add 1 cup plus 2 tbsp. warm water and 2 tbsp. oil. Stir to form a dough and knead briefly. Divide dough into 4 pieces. Wrap in plastic and let rest for 30 minutes.

2 Meanwhile, put potatoes into a 4-qt. saucepan and add water to cover by 1". Season with salt, bring to a boil, and reduce heat to medium-low; simmer until tender, about 15 minutes. Drain potatoes and pass through a food mill or potato ricer into a large bowl. Heat remaining oil in a 12" skillet over medium heat. Add onions, partially cover, and cook, stirring occasionally, until soft, about 15 minutes. Whip onions into potatoes and season with salt and pepper.

3 Heat oven to 375°. Working with one piece of dough at a time, put dough on a lightly floured work surface and roll to  $\frac{1}{16}$ " thickness. Using a 3" cookie cutter, cut out 16 circles. Spoon 1 tbsp. of potato mixture onto center of each circle. Brush edges with egg wash and bring up edges with your fingers and seal to form a purse. Transfer knishes to 2 greased baking sheet and brush with egg wash. Repeat, filling 2 greased baking sheets in all. Bake knishes until golden brown, about 30 minutes. Let cool slightly; serve warm.

### TÖLTÖTT TOJÁS

(Chicken Liver-Stuffed Eggs)

MAKES 32

Halved hard-boiled eggs are a great vehicle for scoops of chopped liver.

- 16 **hard-boiled eggs, peeled**
- $\frac{1}{2}$  **lb. chicken livers, trimmed and roughly chopped**  
Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste
- 2 **tbsp. schmaltz or canola oil**
- 1 **onions, minced**
- 1 **tbsp. French brandy or cognac**
- 1 **tbsp. heavy cream**
- 1 **tbsp. fresh lemon juice**  
Flat-leaf parsley leaves and sliced black olives, for garnish
- Sliced bell peppers and dill pickles, for serving

1 Halve eggs lengthwise and scoop out yolks into a bowl; set yolks aside. Cover egg whites with plastic wrap and set aside in the refrigerator. Season chicken livers with salt and pepper. Heat schmaltz in a 12" skillet over medium-high heat. Add chicken livers and cook, turning once, until browned and cooked through, 6-8 minutes. Transfer chicken livers to a plate; set aside. Add onions to skillet and cook, stirring and scraping any browned bits from bottom of pan, until browned, about 10 minutes. Remove pan from heat, add brandy, and return to heat; cook, stirring, until evaporated, about 1 minute. Stir in heavy cream and lemon juice. Transfer the reserved egg yolks and chicken livers along with the onion mixture to a food processor; purée. Cover with plastic wrap and chill.

2 To serve, transfer the chicken liver purée to a pastry bag fitted with a fluted tip. Pipe 1 tbsp. chicken liver purée into each egg white and garnish with olive slices and parsley. Serve with pickles and peppers.

### SALATA DE VARZA

(Coleslaw)

SERVES 8

The recipe for this deli staple (pictured on page 106) comes from Silvia Weiss, a kosher caterer in Bucharest.

- 3 **medium carrots, peeled and grated**
- $\frac{1}{2}$  **large white cabbage, shredded**

- 3 **tbsp. mayonnaise**
- 2 **tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil**
- 2 **tbsp. white wine vinegar**  
Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste
- Fresh dill sprigs, for garnish

Combine carrots and cabbage in a large bowl. Whisk together mayonnaise, oil, and vinegar in a small bowl and pour over cabbage mixture. Season with salt and pepper and toss to combine. Let coleslaw sit for 30 minutes to allow flavors to meld; serve at room temperature or chilled.

### CHALLAH

(Braided Egg Bread)

MAKES 1 LOAF

For step-by-step instructions on how to braid this challah bread, go to [SAVEUR.COM](http://SAVEUR.COM).

- $\frac{3}{4}$  **cup plus 2 tbsp. milk, heated to 115°**
- $\frac{1}{4}$  **cup plus 1 tsp. sugar**
- 2 **tsp. active dry yeast**
- 4 **tbsp. unsalted butter, melted, plus more for greasing**
- 2 **eggs, lightly beaten**
- 4 **cups flour**
- $1\frac{1}{2}$  **tsp. kosher salt**
- 1 **egg yolk**  
Sesame seeds, to garnish

1 Stir together milk, 1 tsp. sugar, and yeast in a large bowl; let sit until foamy, 10 minutes. Meanwhile, in a small bowl, whisk together butter and eggs. Add to yeast mixture and stir to combine. Add flour, remaining sugar, and salt and stir with a wooden spoon until a dough forms. Transfer dough to a lightly floured work surface and knead until smooth, 6-8 minutes. Transfer to a lightly greased large bowl and cover with plastic wrap; let sit until doubled in size, about 1 hour. Uncover, punch dough down, and re-cover; let sit until slightly puffed, 30 minutes.

2 Uncover dough, divide into 4 equal portions, and roll each into a 16"-long rope. Align dough ropes side by side, perpendicular to you, and



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Challah (for a recipe, see page 104).



Coleslaw (for a recipe, see page 104).



Cholent (for a recipe, see page 102).



Rugelach (for a recipe, see page 107).



pinch together ends farthest from you to form one end of loaf. Braid ropes and pinch ends together to seal. Transfer braided loaf to a parchment paper-lined baking sheet and cover loosely with plastic wrap; let proof for 1 hour.

③ Heat oven to 375°. Stir together egg yolk and 1 tbsp. water in a small bowl and brush all over surface of loaf; sprinkle evenly with sesame seeds. Bake until loaf is dark golden brown, 30–35 minutes. Transfer to a wire rack and let cool for 30 minutes before serving.

### RUGELACH

(Cinnamon, Apricot, and Walnut Pastries)

MAKES 40 RUGELACH

The recipe for these flaky crescent pastries (pictured on facing page) was inspired by one from Karmela Báló, owner of the Cari Mama bakery in Budapest.

- 4  **tbsp. unsalted butter, softened**
- 4  **oz. cream cheese, softened**
- $\frac{1}{2}$   **cup sour cream**
- 1  **egg**
- $2\frac{3}{4}$   **cups flour**
- $\frac{1}{4}$   **cup confectioners' sugar**
- $\frac{1}{4}$   **tsp. kosher salt**
- 5  **tbsp. sugar**
- 1  **tbsp. ground cinnamon**
- $\frac{1}{2}$   **cup apricot jam**
- $\frac{1}{2}$   **cup chopped walnuts**
- $\frac{1}{2}$   **cup currants**
- 1  **egg, lightly beaten**

① Make the dough: In a stand mixer fitted with a paddle, beat butter and cream cheese on medium speed. Add sour cream and egg and continue beating until smooth. Add flour, sugar, and salt and continue beating mixture on low speed until a dough forms around paddle. Divide dough into 4 balls and wrap each in plastic; refrigerate for 1 hour.

② Make the filling: Heat oven to 350°. Combine sugar and cinnamon in a small bowl; set aside. Working with 1 dough ball at a time, use a rolling pin to roll out a 10" circle. Spread 2 tbsp. jam over surface of circle, leaving a  $\frac{1}{4}$  border around edges and sprinkle with 1 tbsp. cinnamon-sugar, 2 tbsp. walnuts, and 2 tbsp. currants; press filling lightly with hands to adhere to jam. Using a knife, cut dough into 10 wedges. Working with 1 wedge at a time, roll up from wide end to narrow end. Transfer rolled crescent to a parchment paper-lined baking sheet; repeat with remaining dough balls, jam, 3 tbsp. cinnamon-sugar, walnuts, and currants. Brush crescents with beaten egg and sprinkle with remaining cinnamon-sugar. Bake, rotating baking sheets halfway through cooking, until well browned, about 20–25 minutes. Transfer to a rack and let cool before serving.

### FLÓDNI

(Apple, Walnut, and Poppy Seed Pastry)

SERVES 9–12

The recipe for this traditional Hungarian dessert (pictured on page 91) was inspired by one from Budapest food blogger Eszter Bodrogi and calls for four layers of jammy filling between sheets of pastry.

#### FOR THE DOUGH:

- 4  **cups flour**
- $\frac{1}{2}$   **tsp. kosher salt**
- 2  **tbsp. sugar**
- 8  **tbsp. unsalted butter, cut into  $\frac{1}{2}$ " pieces and softened**
- 5  **egg yolks**
- $\frac{3}{4}$   **cup white wine**

#### FOR THE FILLINGS:

- 4  **oz. dried apricots, minced**
- $1\frac{1}{2}$   **cups poppy seeds**
- 1  **cup white wine**
- 1  **cup plus 2 tbsp. sugar**
- $\frac{1}{3}$   **cup plus  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup apricot jam**

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- 2 tsp. ground cinnamon
- $\frac{1}{8}$  tsp. ground cloves
- 4 large Granny Smith apples, peeled and grated
- 6 oz. walnuts, finely chopped
- 2 oz. bittersweet chocolate, finely chopped
- 4 oz. pitted prunes, minced
- Zest and juice of 1 lemon
- 4 tbsp. unsalted butter, melted
- 1 egg, beaten with 1 tbsp. water, for egg wash

① Make the dough: In the bowl of a stand mixer, combine the flour, sugar, and salt. Add the butter and mix until incorporated. Add the egg yolks and wine and mix until a dough forms. Replace the paddle with a dough hook and knead dough on medium speed until smooth, 5–6 minutes. Form dough into a ball and wrap in plastic; set aside to rest for 30 minutes.

② Make the fillings: Heat the apricots, poppy seeds,  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup wine,  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup sugar, and  $\frac{1}{3}$  cup jam over medium heat and cook, stirring, until hot, 4 minutes. Transfer the poppy seed filling to a small bowl; set aside. Heat the remaining jam, cinnamon, cloves, and apples in a small saucepan over medium high heat and cook, stirring, until apples soften, 8–10 minutes. Transfer the apple filling to a small bowl; set aside. Heat the remaining wine, 6 tbsp. sugar, walnuts, and chocolate over medium heat and cook, stirring, until smooth, 2–3 minutes. Transfer the walnut filling to a small bowl; set aside. Heat the prunes and  $1\frac{1}{2}$  cups water in a small saucepan over medium-high heat and cook, stirring, until the prunes are soft and water is almost evaporated, 16–18 minutes. Add the remaining sugar and mash with a wooden spoon until smooth. Transfer the prune butter to a small bowl; set aside. Stir the lemon

juice into the poppy seed filling; divide the lemon zest between all 4 fillings, stirring to incorporate.

③ Heat oven to 350°. Line an 8" square baking pan with 2 overlapping sheets of parchment paper cut to 10" x 8". Divide the dough into thirds; set 1 third aside. Cut 2 dough pieces in half and set aside. Transfer the third dough piece to a floured work surface and roll to  $\frac{1}{8}$ " thickness. Line the bottom and sides of the baking pan with dough and let excess dough hang over the edges; trim dough to within 1" of pan and brush with butter. Transfer the poppy seed filling to the bottom layer of dough and smooth the top with spatula. Roll 1 piece of the remaining dough to  $\frac{1}{8}$ " thickness and trim to make an 8" square; top the poppy seed filling with dough and brush with butter. Transfer the apple mixture to top of dough and smooth with spatula. Roll another piece of

the remaining dough to  $\frac{1}{8}$ " thickness and trim to make an 8" square; top the apple filling with dough and brush with butter. Transfer the walnut mixture to top of dough and smooth with spatula. Roll another piece of the remaining dough to  $\frac{1}{8}$ " thickness and trim to make an 8" square; transfer the dough to top of walnut filling and brush with remaining butter. Transfer the prune mixture to top of dough and smooth with spatula; fold the overhanging dough onto the prune filling. Roll the remaining dough piece to  $\frac{1}{8}$ " thickness and trim to make an 8" square; top the prune filling with dough, prick with a fork, and brush with the egg wash. Bake until the pastry is golden brown, 1 hour. Transfer to a rack and let cool 6 hours.

④ Using edges of parchment paper as handles, lift the pastry from pan and transfer to a cutting board. Cut flódni into  $1\frac{1}{2}$ " squares and serve.

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# ROAST PORK RULES

**With a luscious interior and perfectly crisp crackling, this is everything roast meat should be**

**By Christopher Tan Photographs by Todd Coleman**

**O**NE OF MY FAVORITE LUNCHES ON EARTH IS a plate of Cantonese roast meats served over rice. And my favorite part of that lunch is *siew yoke*, roast pork belly with layers of lambent fat, juicy meat, and skin that has bubbled and popped all over like Rice Krispies—hence the name crackling—to produce a puffed and crunchy counterpoint to the meat's succulent interior. In Singapore, where I live, Cantonese restaurants take pride in their *siew yoke*, and recently I've become somewhat obsessed with perfecting the dish myself. § I've always had a thing for roast pork. When I was growing up in London, my father would make a heavily seasoned version called *babi panggang*, a dish from my family's Peranakan heritage. Native to Peninsular Southeast Asia, the Peranakans are descended from Chinese immigrants who adopted local practices and often found wives from within Malay, Indonesian, and other surrounding communities. This mix of cultures gave rise to dishes like *babi panggang*—essentially a Chinese-style roast pork but with a unique fragrance from a judicious dose of freshly roasted and ground coriander seeds. My father would rub the skin of the pork with salt and vinegar to help it crackle, though he never explained why. Often it would work, but not always. The crackling was sometimes light and airy, sometimes hard, and sometimes impenetrable. § Over the years, I became fascinated with roast pork preparations from other cultures. Once, a Spanish cook showed me how she prepared





The author's rendition of roast pork belly, marinated in a blend of five spice powder, salt, sugar, rice wine, and fermented bean curd.



*cochinillo asado* (roast suckling pig). She massaged it all over with salt, pepper, and fruity olive oil, then smeared its split underside with chopped garlic, onion, and thyme and sloshed some white wine and brandy over the skin to encourage it to color during roasting. The result: butter-soft meat and ears like crunchy nuggets of nirvana, but skin that was glossy and crisp and somewhat chewy. The same was true of an Indonesian *babi guling* (suckling pig) I once sampled, whose lemongrass- and pepper-spiced meat was clad in skin prettily gilded with turmeric but only intermittently crackled.

When I decided to perfect my own recipe for crackling-topped roast pork belly, I knew I had to draw from those memories. Cantonese *siew yoke* was the kind I had eaten the most of, so I decided to start with that as a foundation. I approached Pung Lu Tin, a Chinese master chef and consultant at the Society of Chinese Cuisine Chefs of Singapore, who kindly let me pick his brain. First order of business: the marinade. The meat should be seasoned to improve its texture and flavor, but not so much as to steal the skin's thunder. "Five spice powder, salt, some sugar," Pung said. "And the original

Cantonese roast pork uses some red fermented bean curd." Simple and plain, salt to season and firm the meat, spices for fragrant warmth, and a touch of funkiness from the bean curd, which is preserved with a special yeast and rice culture that gives the condiment a floral, misolike aroma and rosy maroon hue. It also tints the cooked meat—otherwise gray or off-white—an attractive pale pink. Apart from the marinade, said Pung, the other crucial points are "control of the fire, and the pricking of the skin."

For more on that, I visited Singapore's Mandarin Oriental Hotel to call on Wilson Goie, who holds the title of roasts chef and oversees a kitchen barely bigger than the traditional Chinese oven it houses. The nearly five-foot-high metal cylinder is centered on a clay vessel of burning charcoal in its base, and it exploits gravity: Meats hang from a rack, and they are self-basted by their fat as it melts. There is no temperature gauge; Goie uses his hands and 20 years of experience to assess the heat and control the roasting process.

Goie's recipe is old-school and minimalist. He rubs a six-and-a-half-pound slab of pork belly on its meat side with salt and other seasonings—which he coyly refused to divulge—and hangs it up for half an hour or so to allow the marinade to soak in. He

then roasts it, meat side facing a medium fire, until it is about 70 percent cooked through; the heat cannot be too high during this phase, or the skin will lose too much moisture and later refuse to crackle properly. Then he removes the pork, pierces its skin all over with an instrument that looks like a wooden mortar with sharp metal prongs protruding from the end, rubs it with just a little salt, and hangs it up for an hour or two in a well-ventilated area. This cooling period, he told me, further promotes the subsequent blistering of the skin.

In a second round of roasting, Goie faced the skin inward over a fierce, flaring fire. Too low a heat produces what he calls "scorpion skin," tough and chewy—a result of the skin's moisture cooking off too gradually. A sufficiently intense fire turns pockets of moisture in the skin to steam, which expands explosively, creating tiny bubbles with walls of protein that crisp in the scorching heat. Goie let the skin roast until it built up a stratum of char, an assurance that the top layer had fully puffed. He pulled the pork out of the oven and scraped off the char with a blade, to reveal a sandy, golden layer of crunch. "If the skin is thick and not quite done, I do another round of charring and scraping," he explained.

Goie's method worked well when I adapted

CHRISTOPHER TAN's most recent article for *SAVEUR* was "My Singapore" (April 2007).



## Crispy Roast Pork

*Siew Yoke*

- 1 4-lb. slab pork belly (1 $\frac{3}{4}$ " thick)
- $\frac{1}{2}$  tbsp. baking soda
- 5 tbsp. Chinese rice wine or sake (see page 134)
- 3 tbsp. sugar
- 2 tbsp. mashed red fermented bean curd (see page 134)
- 1 tbsp. fine sea salt
- $\frac{1}{4}$  tsp. five spice powder

**1** Place pork on a work surface, skin side up. Using a pork-skin pricking tool (see page 134), an ice pick, or a carving fork, prick skin all over, making hundreds of small holes that just puncture the surface; set pork aside.

**2** Dissolve baking soda in 5 cups boiling water. Transfer water to a measuring cup with a spout. Grasp one corner of the pork belly with tongs. Holding pork belly over a bowl or the sink, slowly pour the baking soda mixture in a thin stream over pork skin to scald it.

**3** Transfer pork to a work surface, skin side down. Using a knife, score the meat, making 1"-deep parallel slits spaced 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ " apart.



it for my home oven, but there remained a thin, sticky layer of unblistered skin between the crackling and the underlying fat. Dreading the oven scrubbing already hanging over my head, I didn't want to roast and scrape a second time. Also, while the lacy layer of crackling—Goie calls it *song hua*, which means something like melt-in-the-mouth—was beautiful, I wanted something crunchier, sturdier, more like a corn chip than a puffed cheese ball.

Then I recalled something Pung had said: "Some chefs apply things on the skin—salt, lime juice, baking soda, maltose—to make it more crispy." Acid, alkaline, and alcoholic ingredients all help to denature the skin proteins, disrupting their physical structure and loosening them up, which promotes blister formation and browning. From past failures, I knew that sugar, vinegar, and condiments like soy sauce gave me poor or patchy results, but recipes that used a rubdown of *gan sui*, or alkaline water, a solution of sodium and potassium carbonates, usually achieved a high degree of puff. But I didn't like the soapy, bitter aftertaste the *gan sui* left. I knew I would have to come up with another method.

As important as the crackling was finding the right cut of pork belly. I have learned from my butcher that the best pork belly for

roasting is about one and a half to one and three-quarter inches thick, with evenly alternating strata of meat and fat. In Chinese this is called "five flower" pork, in reference to the number of layers—skin-fat-meat-fat-meat. The fat layer immediately under the skin should not be too thick; a few nubbins of rib-related cartilage in the outermost meat layer are perfectly acceptable. A four- to four-and-a-half-pound slab is a manageable size for a home oven, and the neater the slab's cut

## NOW SUPERLATIVE CRACKLING AND SUCCULENT MEAT ARE AT LAST WITHIN MY GRASP AS A COOK

edges, the more even a shape it will retain during cooking.

To reap the benefits of an alkaline wash without soapiness, I ultimately settled on three steps to treat the skin. First, I decided to prick the raw pork skin, which would allow some alkali to seep in. I used the same nail-tipped Cantonese chef tool that Chef Goie had used. Second, a scald: holding the pork slab vertically over the sink, I used a measuring cup to stream a boiling-hot solution of baking soda

and water over the pricked skin side only, to gently soften and denature it. Third, just before roasting, I brushed the skin with Chinese rose-scented rice wine. Its light acidity neutralizes any remaining soda traces, and its alcohol helps denature the skin proteins.

I laid the pork belly horizontally on a roasting rack fitted inside a roasting pan. In my oven, a slightly longer first roasting phase was required to render out the fat: 45 minutes as opposed to the 30 minutes needed in a restaurant oven. To streamline the process, I eliminated the drying phase between the roasting phases, and instead I marinated the meat overnight before cooking. For the second, skin-crackling roasting phase, I simply let the pork take as long as it needed for the skin to fully puff, and scraped off any charred spots as Chef Goie did.

The first attempt went passably well. A few more experiments taught me: you can use either the regular oven function or the broiler for the second roasting phase; a fan-assisted oven speeds up cooking times; and paper towels can mop up any excess rendered fat that pools on the skin.

Now superlative crackling and succulent meat are at last within my grasp as a cook; I can, consistently, re-create the best of my roast pork experiences, without fear of leathery skin or any other shortcomings that might get in the way of a wholly satisfying meal. 🐷



**4** Combine 3 tbsp. rice wine, sugar, bean curd, salt, and five spice powder in a small bowl and pour marinade over the meat.



**5** Rub marinade all over the meat, pushing it into the slits. Transfer pork skin side up to a baking dish. Wipe any moisture from skin with a paper towel. Refrigerate pork belly uncovered overnight to let marinate as the skin air-dries.



**6** Heat oven to 375°. Thread 3 metal skewers horizontally through the meat layer of the pork belly (to prevent the pork from curling as it cooks). Transfer pork skin side up to a rack set over a foil-lined roasting pan or rimmed baking sheet. Wipe skin again with a paper towel.



**7** Pour remaining rice wine over skin and brush to distribute. Pour hot water into pan to a depth of 1/4". Cook pork on center oven rack until an instant-read thermometer inserted into thickest part reads 160°, about 1 hour. Raise heat to broil and cook until skin is blistered and browned, 5-10 minutes. Before serving, let pork rest 15 minutes. To serve, cut into 1" slices.







# EAT, DRINK, AND BE MERRY

A New Year's Eve party in  
the English countryside marks the culmination  
of winter's feasting season

BY TAMASIN DAY-LEWIS

At left, author Day-Lewis's Decadent Trifle, made with sherry-drenched ginger cake, two kinds of  
custard, raspberries, blueberries, and mousselike, cognac-laced syllabub.



# M

Y FRIENDS AND I ARE STANDING on the doorstep looking out at the corona haloing the moon, a blue moon, which means it's the second full one this month; more than that, it's only the second New Year's Eve blue moon in two decades. There isn't a sound until a firework zooms up into the black yonder, and in the distance, over the Quantock Hills, there are fountains of pink and gold and green. We pop the champagne corks and bay at the moon.

Every year I throw a New Year's Eve party at my house in rural Somerset, in the southwest of England. The number of guests usually hits just above the two-dozen mark, though tonight numbers 25 and 26 are snowed in up in Derbyshire and are sending frantic texts about how they've only got a tin of baked beans and a packet of sausages, the digger can't reach them, and what a cruel fate theirs is compared with ours. This year the oldest guest is an octogenarian and the youngest is 14. The party games are organized by a local friend my children call the Real James Bond, as well he might be with his balding but chic velvet smoking jacket and a history of der-ring-do in the Special Air Service that we'll never quite get to the bottom of for reasons of official secrecy.

Usually I have no idea what I am going to cook until just before the day arrives; I'm too busy with the planning and executing of Christmas and the feasting days following it. One year I reserved the Christmas ham for the New Year's meal and served it with the customary Cumberland sauce made with red currant jelly and port—a jolly old British tradition, but, really, my competitive desire to surprise and delight even the most jaded of palates after a whole week's feasting knows no bounds. I have served everything from a Moroccan *tagine* to chicken Savoyarde bathed in cream from local Jersey cows, white wine, Comté cheese, Dijon mustard, and tarragon. This season starts and ends with feasting.

My one proviso is to make a dish that can be prepared in advance so the work on the night of the party is minimal. This year I decide that what we need is robust flavor, something fragrant, but nothing overly ambitious; the guests will welcome a dish that's fresh, lively, and light after the excesses of Christmas. I settle on *murgh makhanwala*, the curry, also known as butter chicken, made famous in the 1950s at the Moti Mahal restaurant in Delhi. I find myself with an extra

## WHAT WE NEED IS ROBUST FLAVOR, SOME- THING FRAGRANT; THE GUESTS WILL WEL- COME FRESH, LIVELY LIGHTNESS AFTER THE EXCESSES OF CHRISTMAS

KellyBronze turkey at the end of the Christmas week, bird enough to feed the crowd, and so I use it in place of chicken, simply multiplying the other ingredients in the recipe to arrive at enough for 24. Made the day before and then heated gently just before serving, it will taste even better after sitting for a time, which gives the flavors an opportunity to meld and develop. I'll serve it along with accompaniments of creamy, mint-flecked *raita*; lentil *dhal*; brown basmati rice; mango chutney; and bananas fried at the last minute in black mustard, nigella seeds, and crushed cardamom.

For starters, I put out coat button-size *pissaladières*—Provençal pizzas topped with onion, anchovy, olive, and fresh thyme—along with cocktail sausages roasted in honey, grain mustard, and tamari for savory depth. Everyone has been asked to bring champagne for the midnight toast, but I go ahead and open a few bottles before the guests arrive to get the party started.

The scene is set, the tables laid, the placements cunningly arranged so that everyone gets someone they know on one side and someone they don't on the other. The fire has been lit and the over-nighters have arrived. Two vats of vermillion *murgh makhanwala* are burbling on the gas hobs in an undemanding sort of way, and the rice is puffing itself up so boldly that I need an extra pan to catch the overflow. Once we've dished up I can relax. The evening is mine to enjoy, too—which is not to say that everything going according to plan is my idea of the perfect party. No, there has to be a men-

behaving-badly episode, an unexpected twist. One seat remains empty at the head of the kitchen table as we sit down to eat. I ask the wife of the missing guest what has happened. "I think he's gone home," she says with a shrug. He has vanished before the real wassailing has begun, after arriving in more than high spirits from a cocktail party down the road.

Probably best, anyway, in his condition, that he won't be here for dessert. In England, it is traditional to present a liquor-drenched trifle at some stage of the festive proceedings; as with all national dishes, there are as many versions as there are cooks. In the wrong hands this 16th-century masterpiece has descended into farce: stale cake drowned in inferior sherry and topped with layers of Day-Glo red gelatin, shop-bought gloopy custard, and lashings of cream whipped

TAMASIN DAY-LEWIS is the author of *Supper for a Song* (Rizzoli, 2010). Her most recent article for *SAVEUR* was "Direct to You" (June/July 2010).

Facing page, clockwise from top left: butter chicken; author Day-Lewis in the kitchen of her house in Somerset, in the southwest of England; the Somerset countryside near the Day-Lewis's home.





CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: TODD COLEMAN; JAMES OSELAND; JOHN HESELTINE/CORBIS



rigid. It took me years to discover what real trifle is: a glorious thing composed of homemade cake and custard, fresh fruit, and a billowy topping of sherry-laced syllabub. This year, in the week after Christmas, I've experimented with a new version; the first attempt won the children's approval, but what about a name? My son, Harry, came up with it instantly: Decadent Trifle.

Prepared, like the *murgh makhanwala*, a day in advance, the trifle has spent hours upon hours chilling out in the refrigerator, the alcohol gently seeping into its depths, the flavors melding and mellowing and the glass bowl frosting like a window through which the multicolored layers can be glimpsed and wondered at. We always have ginger cake at Christmas; I've baked one studded with cranberries and soaked it in cognac and dark, concentrated oloroso sherry. On

top of that goes a layer of fresh raspberries sprinkled with kirsch, the liquor's pleasantly bitter undertone just enough to offset the sweetness of the fruit, then a layer of dark chocolate custard, followed by raspberry jam. White chocolate custard is poured on next, with handfuls of blueberries to sharpen it. And on top, the creamy syllabub, with a scattering of cranberries and blueberries dipped in melted white chocolate like miniature snowballs.

There is one small postscript to the party. It is at once encouraging and a sort of challenge. A friend's thank-you letter suggests that it may have been the best New Year's Eve feast yet, adding, "That trifle, if I ever make it to heaven, will be a feature of the celestial experience." It looks like I'm going to have to start planning ahead early for next year's feast. 

## MURGH MAKHANWALA

(Butter Chicken)

SERVES 4

Redolent of ginger and garam masala, this lively main course (pictured on page 117) can be prepared a day in advance, which makes it a terrific dish for a party.

### FOR THE CHICKEN:

- 1/2 cup Greek yogurt
- 2 tbsp. fresh lemon juice
- 1 tbsp. canola oil
- 2 tsp. garam masala
- 1 tsp. crushed red chile flakes
- 4 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 3" piece ginger, peeled and thinly sliced crosswise
- Kosher salt, to taste
- 1 3-4-lb. chicken, cut into 8 pieces, skin removed

### FOR THE RAITA:

- 1/2 English cucumber (about 6 oz.), seeded and grated
- 1/2 medium tomato, seeded and finely chopped
- 1 1/2 tsp. kosher salt
- 1 cup plain yogurt
- 1 1/2 tbsp. roughly chopped fresh mint leaves
- 1 tsp. fresh lemon juice
- 1/2 tsp. ground coriander
- 1/4 tsp. ground cumin
- 1/2 medium carrot, finely grated

### FOR THE SAUCE:

- 1 tsp. crushed red chile flakes
- 4 cloves garlic, minced
- 4 green cardamom pods, cracked
- 3 whole cloves, crushed

- 1 28-oz. can whole peeled tomatoes, undrained
- 1 3" piece ginger, washed and grated (skin on)
- 1 bay leaf
- 1/3 cup heavy cream
- 4 tbsp. unsalted butter, cut into 1/2" cubes
- 1 tsp. garam masala
- 4 fresh or frozen curry leaves (see page 134)
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste
- Mango chutney, for serving

1 Marinate the chicken: Combine all marinade ingredients except for chicken in a food processor; purée. Transfer marinade to a large bowl and add chicken, tossing to coat. Cover with plastic wrap and refrigerate for at least 4 hours or overnight.

2 Heat oven to 500°. Transfer chicken to an aluminum foil-lined baking sheet and spoon any marinade from bowl over chicken. Bake chicken until light brown but not cooked through, about 20 minutes. Transfer to a rack; set aside. Meanwhile, make raita: Toss cucumbers, tomatoes, and salt in a colander and let sit for 10 minutes. Press cucumbers and tomatoes to drain well and then transfer to a medium bowl along with yogurt, mint, lemon juice, coriander, cumin, and carrots; toss to combine. Cover with plastic wrap and let sit at room temperature for 1 hour.

3 Make the sauce: In a 6-qt. pot over medium-high heat, combine chile

flakes, garlic, cardamom, cloves, tomatoes, ginger, bay leaf, and 2/3 cup water. Bring to a simmer, reduce heat to medium-low, and cook, stirring often and crushing tomatoes with a spoon, for 25 minutes. Discard bay leaf and transfer sauce to a food processor; purée. Return sauce to pot and continue cooking over medium-low heat until thickened slightly, about 15 minutes. Add reserved chicken pieces and any marinade from pan, along with 1/3 cup water. Cook, stirring occasionally, until sauce thickens and chicken is cooked through, about 10 minutes. Stir in cream, butter, garam masala, and curry leaves. Reduce heat to low and cook until flavors meld, about 5 minutes; season with salt and pepper. Remove from heat and keep warm.

4 To serve, transfer chicken and sauce to a serving platter and serve with the raita and mango chutney.

**Pairing note:** With its earth-meets-berry freshness, Jean-Maurice Raffault Chinon Rose (\$17) complements this dish's rich, cool flavors.

## PISSALADIÈRES

(Onion and Anchovy Tarts)

MAKES 32 MINI TARTS

Based on the classic French caramelized-onion tart with olives and anchovies, these little two-bite hors d'oeuvres (pictured on page 120) pack a flavorful punch.

- 2 tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil
- 2 tsp. minced fresh thyme

## NO MERE TRIFLE

Trifle is a Christmastime tradition in the UK, but it's eaten year-round, with a varying lineup of seasonal ingredients. In fact, over the centuries, the definition of trifle itself has shifted quite a bit. The first recorded recipe—nothing more than "thicke Creame" flavored with sugar, ginger, and rosewater—appeared in the 16th century. By the middle of the 18th, trifle looked more like the dessert we know today: layers of wine-soaked cake, custard, and fruit or jelly, topped with the liquor-laced cream called syllabub. It was in the Victorian era that many of the British holiday traditions now considered timeless actually came to be codified, and that's when trifle became a fixture of the festive season. Over time, trifle has accommodated different ingredients as they've entered the British larder: chocolate, canned fruits, instant custard. Tamasin Day-Lewis's recipe winterizes the dessert with ginger cake, two types of chocolate custard, and a cognac-laced syllabub. And that's the beauty of trifle: as long as you include the basic elements of cake, fruit, custard, cream, and a generous volume of booze, you can be as creative as you like. —Ben Mims



ILLUSTRATION: BRENDA WEAVER





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**PALM BAY**  
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- 2 large red onions, halved lengthwise and thinly sliced
  - 2 tsp. sugar
  - 1 tsp. red wine vinegar
  - Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste
  - 10 salt-cured black olives, pitted and minced
  - 2 9" x 11" sheets frozen puff pastry, thawed
  - 8 oil-packed anchovy filets, drained, cut into 4 slivers each
  - Minced chives or flat-leaf parsley, for garnish
- $\frac{1}{4}$  cup heavy cream
  - 2 eggs
  - 1 tbsp. ground ginger
  - $\frac{1}{2}$  tsp. baking soda
  - $\frac{1}{2}$  tsp. kosher salt
  - 1 cup fresh or frozen lingonberries or halved cranberries

## FOR THE CUSTARDS:

- $\frac{3}{4}$  cup sugar
- 7 tbsp. cornstarch
- $\frac{1}{2}$  tsp. kosher salt
- 4 egg yolks
- 2 eggs
- 4 cups milk

## 1 cup heavy cream

1 Make the ginger cake: Heat oven to 325°. Butter and flour an 8" square baking pan; set aside. Heat butter, golden syrup, and brown sugar in a 2-qt. saucepan over medium-high heat, stirring occasionally, until butter is melted and mixture is smooth. Remove from heat and let cool slightly. Add cream and eggs and whisk until smooth; set aside. In a medium bowl, whisk together  $1\frac{1}{2}$  cups flour, ground ginger, baking soda, and salt; add to syrup mixture and stir until just

1 Heat oil in a 12" skillet over medium heat. Add thyme and onions and cook, partially covered, stirring occasionally, until very soft, 30 minutes. Increase heat to medium-high, add sugar and vinegar, and season with salt and pepper. Cook, stirring, until caramelized, 12-15 minutes. Stir in olives, remove from heat, and set aside.

2 Meanwhile, heat oven to 400°. Roll out puff pastry to  $\frac{1}{8}$ " thickness. Using a 2  $\frac{1}{2}$ " cookie cutter, cut out 16 circles from each sheet. Transfer pastry circles to 2 parchment paper-lined baking sheets and prick each circle all over with tines of a fork. Cover circles with a sheet of parchment and another baking sheet; bake until light golden brown, 15-18 minutes. Uncover and bake until golden brown, 2-3 minutes more. Transfer circles to a large serving platter, spoon about 1 tsp. onion mixture over each, and top with a sliver of anchovy. Garnish with chives.

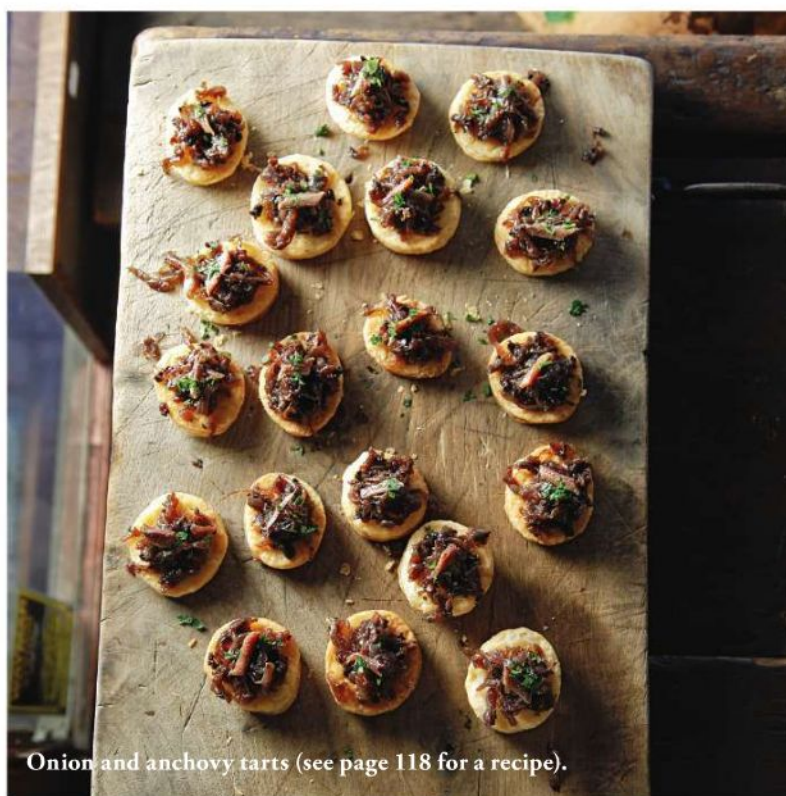
## DECADENT TRIFLE

SERVES 10-12

Drenched in sherry and kirsch, this holiday dessert (pictured on page 114) features layer upon layer of ginger cake, custard, berries, chocolate, and cream. It's a showstopper.

## FOR THE GINGER CAKE:

- 8 tbsp. unsalted butter, plus more for pan
- $1\frac{3}{4}$  cups flour, plus more for pan
- $\frac{3}{4}$  cup Lyle's golden syrup (see page 134) or dark corn syrup
- $\frac{1}{2}$  cup packed light brown sugar



Onion and anchovy tarts (see page 118 for a recipe).

- 8 oz. 70 percent dark chocolate, finely chopped
- 4 tbsp. unsalted butter, cubed
- 3 tsp. vanilla extract
- 8 oz. white chocolate, finely chopped
- 10 oz. fresh blueberries
- 2 tbsp. sweet oloroso sherry
- 12 oz. fresh raspberries
- 2 tbsp. kirsch
- 1 cup seedless raspberry jam

## FOR THE SYLLABUB:

- 1 tbsp. sugar
- 1 tsp. sweet oloroso sherry
- 1 tsp. cognac or brandy
- $\frac{1}{2}$  tsp. lemon zest

combined. Toss remaining flour with lingonberries in a small bowl and add to batter; stir to combine. Pour into a baking pan and bake until a toothpick inserted into center of cake comes out clean, 45-50 minutes. Transfer to rack and let cool. Unmold cake, cut half the cake into 1" cubes; set aside. Reserve remaining cake for another use.

2 Make the custards: Whisk together  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup sugar, 2 tbsp. cornstarch, and  $\frac{1}{4}$  tsp. salt in a 2-qt. saucepan; add 2 egg yolks and 1 egg and whisk until smooth. Add 2 cups milk and heat over medium heat. Bring to a boil, stirring often, and cook until mixture

thickens, 1-2 minutes. Remove from heat and add dark chocolate in four batches, whisking after each addition until smooth. Add 2 tbsp. butter and 2 tsp. vanilla and whisk until smooth; transfer to a bowl, cover surface with plastic wrap, and refrigerate dark chocolate custard until chilled. Whisk together remaining sugar, cornstarch, and salt in another 2-qt. saucepan; add remaining egg yolks and egg and whisk until smooth. Add remaining milk and heat over medium heat. Bring to a boil, stirring often, and cook until mixture thickens, 1-2 minutes. Remove from heat and add white chocolate in four batches, whisking after each addition until smooth; add remaining butter and vanilla and whisk until smooth. Transfer to a bowl and cover surface with plastic wrap; let cool to room temperature. Fold blueberries into white chocolate custard and set aside.

3 Assemble trifle: Arrange ginger cake cubes snugly in bottom of a 3-qt. glass trifle dish or bowl; drizzle with sherry. In a medium bowl, toss raspberries with kirsch and add to the top of the cake in a single layer. Spoon white chocolate custard over raspberries and smooth top with a rubber spatula; refrigerate until set, 30 minutes. Meanwhile, heat the raspberry jam in a small saucepan over medium heat until loose; pour through a fine strainer set over a small bowl and let cool for 10 minutes. Pour jam over white chocolate custard and spread evenly. Return trifle to refrigerator and chill until set, 2 hours. Stir dark chocolate custard until smooth, spoon over jam, and smooth with spatula; cover dish with plastic wrap; chill for 8 hours.

4 An hour before you plan to serve trifle, make syllabub: Whisk together sugar, sherry, cognac, and lemon zest in a large bowl until sugar dissolves. Add cream and whisk until mixture holds peaks but is not stiff; spoon syllabub over dark chocolate custard, creating swirls and peaks with spoon, and chill until ready to serve.

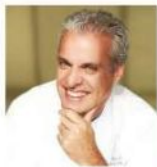




# SAVEUR CHEFS GIVE BACK



ONE OF A  
KIND



HELPING  
THE  
CAUSE



FEEDING A  
NEED



EXCLUSIVE  
CHEF  
EXPERIENCES



## GIVE & TASTE

### A DELICIOUS WAY TO SUPPORT A WORTHY CAUSE

This holiday season, SAVEUR, along with some of the country's top chefs, will give back through a special holiday auction that will raise money and awareness for some of our favorite charities across the globe.

Starting on November 16, you can bid on once-in-a-lifetime cooking and dining experiences with some of the most incredible chefs in the industry. All proceeds will be donated to national charities selected by each chef. Browse through the next few pages to see what auction lots are available.

Start Bidding Today at:

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## SAVEUR CHEFS GIVE BACK



**CHEF MICHAEL ANTHONY**  
GRAMERCY TAVERN  
**CHARITY OF CHOICE:**  
**GELL**

As a first-of-its-kind NYC Greenroof Environmental Literacy Laboratory, GELL, will provide PS41 students empirical lessons designed to enhance science, math and aesthetic education in an outdoor observational learning space.

**AUCTION PRIZE:** Get an insider's look at Gramercy Tavern with a tour and lunch for 4 with Executive Chef Michael Anthony.



**CHEF JIMMY BRADLEY**  
THE HARRISON, THE RED CAT  
**CHARITY OF CHOICE:**  
**CHARITY: WATER**

For four years, this non-profit organization has been bringing clean and safe drinking water to citizens in developing nations. It has helped fund over 2,906 projects in 17 countries, assisting over one million people since its founding.

**AUCTION PRIZE:** Enjoy a fabulous private dinner for 8 at The Harrison in New York City, prepared specially for you by Owner/Chef Jimmy Bradley.



**CHEF VICTOR CASANOVA**  
CULINA  
**CHARITY OF CHOICE:**  
**FOOD BANK OF LA**

The Foodbank provides food for nearly 900 member agency sites including abused and abandoned children homes, battered women shelters, senior centers, local food pantries, soup kitchens, AIDS hospices and more.

**AUCTION PRIZE:** Delight in a four-course dinner for 10 in the Grappa Room at Culina located in the luxurious Four Seasons Hotel in Los Angeles.

*Please note all auction items are subject to certain restrictions and blackout dates. For all details, visit [SAVEUR.com/GiveandTaste](http://SAVEUR.com/GiveandTaste).*



**CHEF SCOTT CONANT**  
SCARPETTA, FAUSTINA  
**CHARITY OF CHOICE:**  
**CHILDREN'S HEALTH FUND**

Children's Health Fund, is committed to providing health care to the nation's most medically underserved children through the development and support of innovative primary care medical programs; response to public health crises; and the promotion of guaranteed access to appropriate health care for all children.

**AUCTION PRIZE:** Dine at the chef's counter at LA's Scarpetta with a 10 course tasting dinner and wine pairing prepared by Chef Scott Conant.



**CHEF JOHN DELUCIE**  
THE LION  
**CHARITY OF CHOICE:**  
**FEEDING AMERICA**

Feeding America is the nation's leading domestic hunger-relief charity whose mission is to feed America's hungry through a nationwide network of member food banks and engage our country in the fight to end hunger.

**AUCTION PRIZE:** Enjoy a special meal and wine pairing for 4 prepared by Chef John DeLucie at The Lion, New York's premier and exclusive new West Village eatery. Includes signed copy of his book, *The Hunger*.



**CHEF NEAL FRASER**  
GRACE  
**CHARITY OF CHOICE:**  
**C-CAP**

Careers through Culinary Arts Program (C-CAP) works with public schools across the nation to prepare high school students for college and career opportunities in the restaurant and hospitality industry. C-CAP provides teacher training, scholarships, cooking competitions, job shadows, training and internships, college and career advising, and product/equipment donations.

**AUCTION PRIZE:** Join Chef Neal Fraser in the SAVEUR Test Kitchen in New York City for a private lunch or dinner for 6.



From November  
16-December 16, bid  
on an Exclusive Chef  
Experience



**CHEF PETER HOFFMAN**  
SAVOY, BACK FORTY  
**CHARITY OF CHOICE:**  
**CHEFS COLLABORATIVE**

Chefs Collaborative is the leading nonprofit network of chefs that fosters a sustainable food system through advocacy, education, and collaboration with the broader food community.

**AUCTION PRIZE:** Accompany Chef Peter Hoffman on a personal tour at the famous Union Square Farmer's Market in New York City followed by lunch for 4 at Savoy.



**CHEF GAVIN KAYSEN**  
CAFÉ BOULUD  
**CHARITY OF CHOICE:**  
**BOCUSE D'OR USA FOUNDATION**

Established in 2009, the Foundation is aimed to build a sustainable community of young American chefs that are knowledgeable and confident in their career pursuits and will be life long ambassadors of quality and excelled in the world of gastronomy.

**AUCTION PRIZE:** Go behind the scenes of Chef Gavin Kaysen's Café Boulud kitchen and enjoy the lunch of a lifetime for 4 guests.



## SAVEUR CHEFS GIVE BACK



### CHEF CHRISTOPHER LEE

AUREOLE

**CHARITY OF CHOICE:**  
**AUTISM SPEAKS**

Founded in 2005, Autism Speaks is the nation's largest autism science and advocacy organization, dedicated to funding research into the causes, prevention, treatments and a cure for autism; increasing awareness of autism spectrum disorders; and advocating for the needs of individuals with autism and their families.

**AUCTION PRIZE:** Join James Beard award-winning Chef Christopher Lee for a hands-on cooking lesson at the SAVEUR Test Kitchen. After shopping with Chef Lee at the local farmer's market, you and 5 guests will head back to the SAVEUR Test Kitchen to learn fundamental kitchen skills and prepare a delicious seasonal meal.



### CHEF MICHAEL LOMONACO

PORTER HOUSE NEW YORK

**CHARITY OF CHOICE:**  
**CITY HARVEST**

Now serving New York City for more than 25 years, City Harvest is the world's first food rescue organization, dedicated to feeding the city's hungry men, women, and children.

**AUCTION PRIZE:** Learn from the master with a cooking workshop and lunch at Porter House New York, including custom wine pairings with Executive Chef Michael Lomonaco.



### CHEF TONY MANTUANO

SPIAGGIA

**CHARITY OF CHOICE:**  
**FEEDING AMERICA**

Feeding America is the nation's leading domestic hunger-relief charity. Their mission is to feed America's hungry through a nationwide network of member food banks and engage our country in the fight to end hunger.

**AUCTION PRIZE:** Spend the day in the Spiaggia kitchen! See where some of the best Italian dishes in Chicago get created each day alongside Chef Tony Mantuano, followed by a lunch in the dining room for 4.



### CHEF BILL MCDANIEL

THE RED CAT

**CHARITY OF CHOICE:**  
**CENTER FOR FOOD ACTION**

The Center for Food Action (CFA) provides emergency food, rental and utility assistance, counseling, and advocacy to our neighbors in need in Bergen County and in the Upper Passaic Valley.

**AUCTION PRIZE:** Gather 7 friends for a morning of food shopping with The Red Cat Chef Bill McDaniel followed by lunch at the SAVEUR Test Kitchen.



### CHEF GEORGE MENDES

ALDEA

**CHARITY OF CHOICE:**  
**DOCTORS WITHOUT BORDERS**

Created in France in 1971 by doctors and journalists, Doctors Without Borders is an international medical humanitarian organization that provides aid to almost 60 countries to people whose survival is threatened by violence, neglect, or catastrophe primarily due to armed conflict, epidemics, malnutrition, exclusion from health care, or natural disasters.

**AUCTION PRIZE:** Learn from Chef George Mendes himself! You and a friend are invited to join Chef in the SAVEUR Test Kitchen for a private cooking class culminating with lunch or dinner.



### CHEF DAVID MYERS

COMME ÇA LOS ANGELES & THE COSMOPOLITAN OF LAS VEGAS

**CHARITY OF CHOICE:**  
**KIPP**

KIPP, the Knowledge Is Power Program, is a national network of free, open-enrollment, college-preparatory public schools with a track record of preparing students in underserved communities for success in college and in life. There are currently 99 KIPP schools in 20 states and the District of Columbia serving more than 26,000 students.

**AUCTION PRIZE:** Dinner for 12, including 18A cocktails and wine pairings. Hosted by Chef David Myers at Comme Ça at The Cosmopolitan of Las Vegas.



### CHEF MICHAEL PSILAKIS

KEFI, EOS, FISH TAG

**CHARITY OF CHOICE:**  
**SHARE OUR STRENGTH**

Share Our Strength is a national organization that works to make sure no kid in America goes hungry. They weave together a net of community groups, activists and food programs to catch children facing hunger and surround them with nutritious food where they live, learn and play.

**AUCTION PRIZE:** A once-in-a-lifetime experience from Greek-American culinary star Chef Michael Psilakis to roast an entire lamb on a spit at winner's home for 12 people. Personally autographed copies of his acclaimed book, "How to Roast a Lamb" will accompany.



### CHEF ERIC RIPERT

LE BERNARDIN

**CHARITY OF CHOICE:**  
**CITY HARVEST**

Now serving New York City for more than 25 years, City Harvest is the world's first food rescue organization, dedicated to feeding the city's hungry men, women, and children.

**AUCTION PRIZE:** Chef Eric Ripert is offering you and 3 guests a trip to the market followed by dinner in the SAVEUR Test Kitchen with a special recipe you'll prepare together from the evening appearing in a future issue of the magazine!



### CHEF AARÓN SÁNCHEZ

CENTRICO, PALADAR, TV PERSONALITY

**CHARITY OF CHOICE:**  
**CITYMEALS-ON-WHEELS**

Citymeals-on-Wheels raises private funds to ensure no homebound elderly New Yorker will ever go a day without food or human company. In addition, over 1,500 volunteers collectively spent 62,000 hours visiting and delivering meals to New York's frail aged.

**AUCTION PRIZE:** Relish in a private dinner for 4 people at Centrico in New York City, prepared by acclaimed Chef and Food Network star, Aarón Sánchez.



## SAVEUR CHEFS GIVE BACK



**CHEF BILL TELEPAN**  
TELEPAN

**CHARITY OF CHOICE:**  
WELLNESS IN THE SCHOOLS

Wellness in the Schools (WITS) is a non-profit, community based organization founded in 2005 in order to improve the environment, nutrition, and fitness in NYC public schools. In an effort to combat childhood obesity and improve school environments, WITS developed Cook for Kids, Coach for Kids, and Green for Kids, three NYC based programs poised for replication nationwide.

**AUCTION PRIZE:** Tour a NYC farmer's market with Telepan Owner/Chef Bill Telepan followed by lunch for 4 at the restaurant.



**MICHAEL TUSK**  
QUINCE

**CHARITY OF CHOICE:**  
TIPPING POINT

Tipping Point works to eliminate poverty in the San Francisco Bay Area. Tipping Point finds, funds and partners with a group of very worthy organizations, providing them the dollars and support they need to meet their goal – to serve and support low-income families.

**AUCTION PRIZE:** A private, personalized tour of the San Francisco Ferry Plaza Farmer's Market, followed by a multi-course dinner for 8 guests prepared by Chef Michael Tusk, with custom wine pairings, at Quince.



**CHEF SUZANNE TRACHT**  
JAR

**CHARITY OF CHOICE:**  
SOVA COMMUNITY FOOD AND  
RESOURCE PROGRAM

SOVA provides free groceries and supportive services to over 10,000 individuals of all ages, ethnicities and religions each month, at SOVA's three comprehensive service centers in the Los Angeles area.

**AUCTION PRIZE:** Delight in a private dinner for 6 with Chef Suzanne Tracht at Jar after touring the Santa Monica Farmer's Market!



**CHEF DAVID WALZOG**  
SW STEAKHOUSE

**CHARITY OF CHOICE:**  
THREE SQUARE FOOD BANK OF  
LAS VEGAS

A national model project, Three Square is a community collaborative partnership with the gaming industry, businesses, non-profit agencies, food distributors, UNLV, the CCSD, governmental entities, the media and hundreds of volunteers to efficiently and effectively serve hope to the hungry.

**AUCTION PRIZE:** See the culinary side of Sin City! Enjoy a two-night stay at Wynn Las Vegas for 5 couples with dinners in Chef David Walzog's SW Steakhouse and the brand new Lakeside Grill. Prize also includes tickets to see La Reve at the Wynn.



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Please note all auction items are subject to certain restrictions and blackout dates. For all details, visit [SAVEUR.com/GiveandTaste](http://SAVEUR.com/GiveandTaste).



**DEER VALLEY**  
**CHARITY OF CHOICE:**  
ALZHEIMER'S ASSOCIATION

The Alzheimer's Association is the leading, global voluntary health organization in Alzheimer care and support, and the largest private, nonprofit funder of Alzheimer research. They work on a global, national, and local level to enhance care and support for all those affected by Alzheimer's and related dementias.

**AUCTION PRIZE:** Rated the #1 ski resort in North America an unprecedented four years in a row by the readers of SKI magazine, Deer Valley Resort is offering 4 days of skiing and rentals for 2 people. Enjoy days of luxurious vacationing, including perfectly-groomed slopes, world-class hotel amenities, and exclusive dinners at some of Deer Valley's award-winning restaurants.

**SAVEUR.COM/GIVEANDTASTE**



IN THE SAVEUR

# KITCHEN

Discoveries and Techniques from Our Favorite Room in the House » Edited by Todd Coleman

## Smart Cookies

**C**OME DECEMBER, even novice bakers break out the cookie cutters and the red and green sprinkles. Christmas cookies are more than mere sweets: they are gifts, mementos of childhood, and, often, markers of the baker's specific heritage and beliefs. This year, in the interest of expanding our repertoire, we asked pastry chef Nick Malgieri to share a few of his favorite Christmas cookie recipes from around the world. He came back with a fascinating selection, ranging from delicate, crescent-shaped Austrian *vanillekipferl* to buttery Argentine *alfajores* filled with dulce de leche. And, yes, there are even all-American sugar cookies decked out in bright-green icing and silvery baubles. Happy Holidays! —Ben Mims

**1 Speculaas** A specialty of the Netherlands and Belgium, these are cousins of gingerbread, only lighter and more delicately spiced. They're also showstoppers, thanks to the intricately carved wooden molds used to make them, which form the cookies into bas-relief images of characters and symbols from stories about Saint Nicholas, or Sinterklaas, whose name day, December 6, kicks off the Christmas season in that part of the world.





**2 Vanillekipferl**

Akin to Mexican wedding cookies and Greek *kourabiedes*, these Austrian vanilla crescents made with ground walnuts and showered in confectioners' sugar are served throughout central Europe during the weeks leading up to Christmas.

**3 Krumkakes**

These Norwegian wafer cookies, eaten across Scandinavia during the Christmas season, are light and crisp and perfumed with cardamom. They're made like waffles on a special griddle that imprints an intricate design, and then they're rolled and filled with whipped cream.

**4 Galletas con**

**Chochitos** Tiny, ring-shaped butter cookies like these are a popular holiday treat in Mexico. They're typically decorated with chocolate sprinkles, but green, red, and white ones transform them into festive Christmas wreaths.

**5 Tozzetti**

These Roman-style biscotti are a favorite of Nick Malgieri's for their distinctive anise flavor and atypical baking method: the loose batter is poured onto a baking sheet and baked like a cake. The result is light biscotti with large chunks of almonds and hazelnuts.







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**6 Basler Brunli** Specialties of Basel, in northern Switzerland, these chocolatey confections are often described as Swiss brownies. Almonds, sugar, and chocolate are ground fine and bound together with egg whites to create a satisfyingly chewy texture, while cinnamon and cloves impart an unmistakable flavor of old-fashioned Christmas cheer. Added bonus: they're gluten-free, so they're a holiday cookie everyone can enjoy.

**6 Sugar Cookies** Cut into Christmas trees, wreaths, snowflakes, snowmen, candy canes, and every other holiday design imaginable, these are classic holiday treats in the U.S. The cookies themselves are pure buttery comfort, but when decorated with royal icing, sprinkles, dragées, and sanding sugar, they're elevated to cultural icons, beloved by children and grown-ups alike. Plus, they're almost as much fun to make as they are to eat.

**7 Caramel Crumb Bars** In New Zealand, these shortbread bars are actually baked throughout the year, but the sheer extravagance of their double-layered topping—rich caramel and a crumbly butter streusel—makes them a perfect holiday treat.

**9 Alfajores** Variations on this elegant cookie can be found throughout Latin America, but *alfajores* are associated above all with the café culture of Buenos Aires. They're served year-round with coffee, but during the holidays home cooks all over Argentina break out their trusted family recipes—each one unique but always with a decadent filling of dulce de leche sandwiched between two rounds of crisp butter cookie.





MINISTERO DELLE POLITICHE AGRICOLE  
ALIMENTARI E FORESTALI

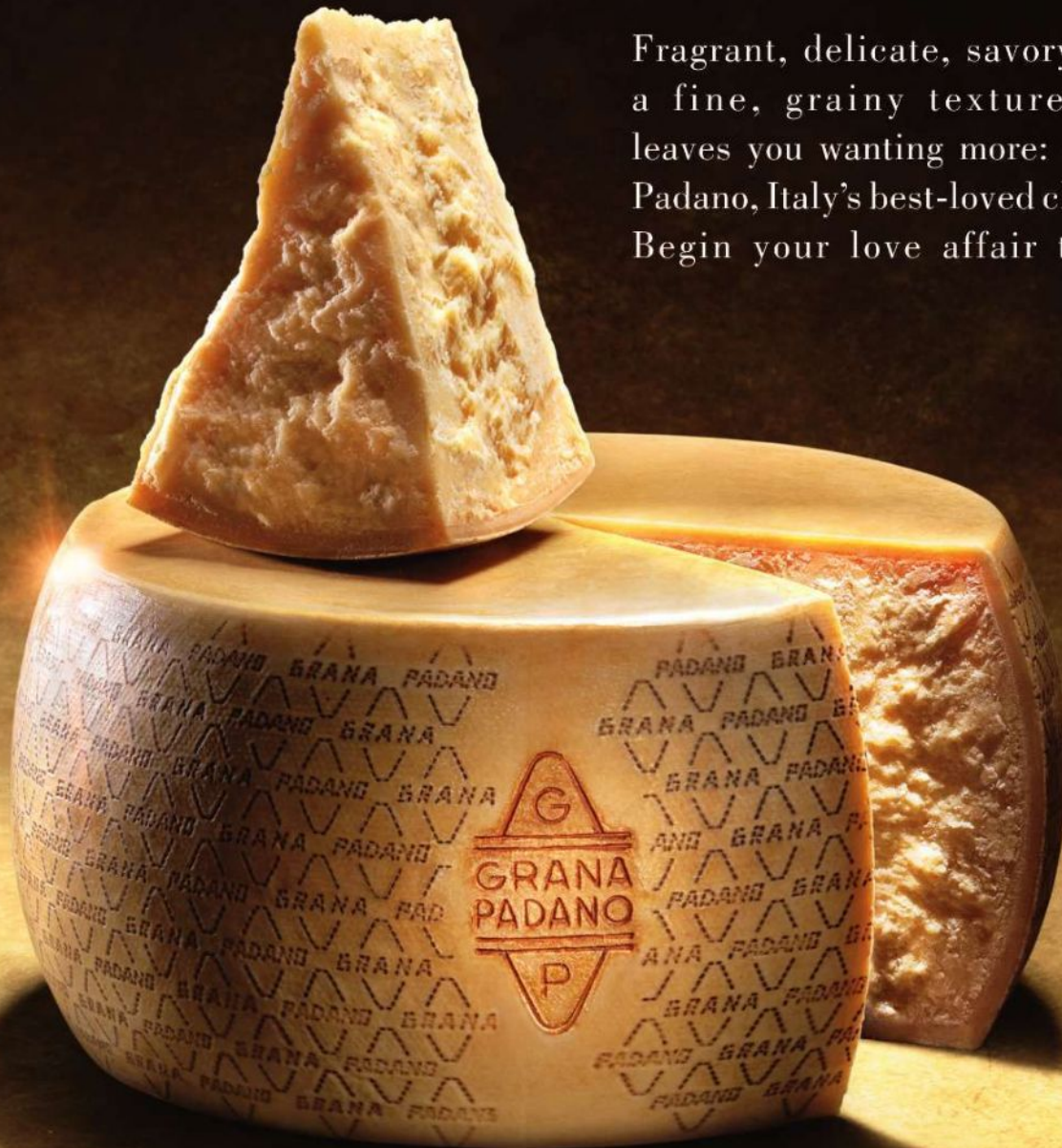


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## OUR FAVORITE Foodie Finds

Our board members travel every inch of the globe to bring you the best in culinary destinations. Here, we share some of their recent highlights.



**DONNA EVANS** just returned from gorgeous Australia. Meat pies and Foster's competed with fresh caught barramundi and fine Australian wine for favorite dining choices. Dessert: Pavlova!



**JACQUI MATTHEWS** spent a week in Provence at Patricia Wells' "Truffle Class." Her pumpkin soup with shaved black truffles is a delicious starter to any fall dinner party.



**JILL TAYLOR** feasted on the diversity of incredible India through Thali platters bursting with spices. Savory kebabs, tandoori, curries, and chutneys thrilled her senses, inspiring the chef within.



**ELLISON POE** returned from Myanmar where she was on the fabulous Orient Express cruise, The Road to Mandalay, on the Irrawaddy River. The food was delightful, light and spicy with wonderful prawns and grilled vegetables.



**JUDY PERL** defines perfection as the endive salad at Blanc, the chic Mediterranean brasserie at the Mandarin Oriental Hotel in Barcelona.



**THOMAS JACKSON** learned how to de-skin green chiles by roasting prior to cooking, culminating with the best tasting Chile Rellenos in Hatch, New Mexico. As the Chile capital of the world, it was a delightful destination.

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### SPECULAAS

(Molded Ginger Cookies)

MAKES ABOUT 2 DOZEN

- 3 cups flour
- 2 tsp. ground cinnamon
- 1½ tsp. freshly grated nutmeg
- 1 tsp. ground coriander
- 1 tsp. ground ginger
- ½ tsp. ground cloves
- ½ tsp. baking soda
- ½ tsp. kosher salt
- ¼ tsp. freshly ground white pepper
- 12 tbsp. unsalted butter, softened
- 1 cup packed light brown sugar
- ⅓ cup milk

① In a bowl, whisk together flour, spices, baking soda, salt, and white pepper; set aside. In a mixer, beat together butter and sugar. Add half the flour mixture; mix. Add milk and remaining flour mixture; mix. Form into 2 disks. Chill, covered, for 2 hours.

② Heat oven to 350°. Working with 1 disk at a time, break off chunks and press into a floured speculaas mold (see page 134); scrape away excess dough and invert mold to free dough. Brush away flour from mold. Transfer imprinted dough pieces to parchment paper-lined baking sheets, spacing pieces 2" apart. Bake until golden brown, 16–18 minutes. Let cool.

### VANILLEKIPFERL

(Vanilla Crescents)

MAKES 4 DOZEN

- 1 cup confectioners' sugar, plus more for finishing cookies
- 16 tbsp. unsalted butter, softened
- 2 tsp. vanilla extract
- 5 oz. walnuts, finely ground in food processor
- 2½ cups flour, plus more for rolling

Heat oven to 325°. Beat together sugar, butter, and vanilla in a bowl; mix in nuts and flour. Flour and roll into a cylinder; divide into 48 pieces. Roll each into a sausage shape. Taper ends; bend into a crescent. Transfer to parchment paper-lined baking sheets, spacing cookies 1" apart. Bake until golden, 12–15 minutes. Sift with confectioners' sugar. Let cool.

### KRUMKAKES

(Norwegian Wafer Cookies)

MAKES ABOUT 2 DOZEN

- 1 cup sugar
- 4 eggs
- 9 tbsp. unsalted butter, melted and cooled
- 1 tsp. ground cardamom
- ½ tsp. vanilla extract

- 1½ cups flour
- 2 tbsp. baking powder
- Sweetened whipped cream
- Confectioners' sugar, to garnish

In a bowl, whisk together sugar and eggs. Whisk in 8 tbsp. butter, cardamom, and vanilla. Sift flour and baking powder into batter; whisk. Heat a krumkake maker (see page 134); brush with remaining butter. Add 1 heaping tbsp. batter to each mold. Close cover; cook until wafers are golden, 45–60 seconds. Wrap 1 wafer around a krumkake cone; let harden. Remove from cone; repeat. Repeat with remaining batter. Let cool. Pipe cream into krumkakes; dust with sugar.

### GALLETAS CON CHOCHITOS

(Mexican Butter Cookies with Sprinkles)

MAKES 3 DOZEN

- 1½ cups flour
- ½ tsp. baking powder
- ¼ tsp. kosher salt
- ¾ cup sugar
- 8 tbsp. unsalted butter, softened
- 1 tsp. vanilla extract, preferably Mexican
- 3 egg yolks
- 1 egg white, lightly beaten
- Multicolored sprinkles, for decorating

Whisk together flour, baking powder, and salt in a bowl. In a mixer, beat together sugar, butter, and vanilla until fluffy. Add yolks one at a time; beat. Add dry ingredients; mix. Roll dough into a 12"-long cylinder. Cut cylinder into 3 pieces; roll each into a 12"-long cylinder. Cut each cylinder into twelve 1"-long pieces. Roll each into a ball; transfer to a lined baking sheet. Flatten each into a small disk; using your finger, poke a hole in center of each disk. Chill for 1 hour. Heat oven to 300°. Brush each ring with egg white; dip into sprinkles to coat. Return to baking sheets; bake for 15 minutes. Let cool.

### TOZZETTI

(Anise, Almond, and Hazelnut Biscotti)

MAKES 40

Butter, for greasing pan

- 3½ cups flour, plus more for pan
- 1 tbsp. baking powder
- 2 cups whole blanched almonds, toasted
- 1½ cups whole blanched hazelnuts, toasted
- 2¼ cups sugar
- 5 eggs
- ¼ cup anise-flavored liqueur, like sambuca
- 1 tbsp. crushed aniseed
- 1 tbsp. vanilla extract

① Heat oven to 375°. Grease and flour a 10" x 15"



# SAVEUR MENU

SAVEUR's guide to EVENTS, PROMOTIONS & PRODUCTS

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### SAVEUR's Travel Advisory Board

SAVEUR is the no.1 destination for all of your travel needs! With a whole new Virtuoso Travel Advisory Board for 2010-2011, and a site brimming with answers to your travel questions, we are the perfect resource for discovering once-in-a-lifetime packages, and finding information about all of your upcoming voyages. Visit [SAVEUR.com/Virtuoso](http://SAVEUR.com/Virtuoso) now to start exploring!

Get to know the new board and begin booking your own custom travel package today!

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### Las Vegas' Finest Resort Takes a Vacation in Napa Valley

On October 9, SAVEUR and Bellagio hosted an incredible experience at the Quintessa Estate in beautiful Napa Valley, the heart of wine country. Hosted by Picasso's superstar chef Julian Serrano, guests enjoyed a private vineyard tour during prime crush season, and an exclusive dinner menu paired with delicious wines selected by Bellagio's Director of Wine, Jason Smith. The beauty of the rolling hills of Northern California served as a magical setting for an evening filled with delectable cuisine and the unforgettable wines from Quintessa.

[www.bellagio.com](http://www.bellagio.com)

Bottom left image, left to Right: Fletch Brunelle, Senior VP Hotel Sales & Marketing, Bellagio; Agustin Huneeus, Proprietor, Quintessa; Merri Lee Kingsly, VP, Group Publisher, Bonnier Corporation; Agustin F. Huneeus Jr.; Jason Smith, Director of Wine, Bellagio.



### A DELICIOUS WAY TO SUPPORT A WORTHY CAUSE

This holiday season, SAVEUR, along with some of the country's top chefs, will give back through a special auction platform that will raise money and awareness for charities across the globe. Starting on November 16, you will have the chance to bid on once-in-a-lifetime cooking and dining experiences with some of the most incredible chefs in the industry. Bid on auction prizes from chefs Eric Ripert, Scott Conant, John DeLucie, Chris Lee, Tony Mantuano, and more! So mark your calendars, and log on to [SAVEUR.com/GiveandTaste](http://SAVEUR.com/GiveandTaste) on November 16 to start bidding!

Visit our Sweepstakes & Promotions page online at [www.saveur.com](http://www.saveur.com)



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### 2 | BELLAGIO

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jelly roll pan; set aside. In a bowl, whisk together flour and baking powder; toss in nuts. In a bowl, whisk together sugar and eggs; whisk in sambuca, aniseed, and vanilla. Add flour mixture; fold. Pour into pan; bake until golden, 20 minutes. Let biscotti cool.

② Reduce oven temperature to 325°. Remove cooled biscotti slab from pan; cut crosswise into twenty 10"-long strips; cut each strip in half to form forty 5"-long strips. Transfer strips to parchment paper-lined baking sheets, spacing strips 1/2" apart. Bake until golden brown, 20-25 minutes. Let cool.

#### CLASSIC SUGAR COOKIES

MAKES ABOUT 2 DOZEN LARGE COOKIES

- 6 cups flour
- 1 1/2 tsp. baking powder
- 1 tsp. kosher salt
- 3 cups sugar
- 1 1/2 cups (3 sticks) unsalted butter, softened
- 1 tbsp. vanilla extract
- 3 eggs
- Royal icing, sprinkles, and sanding sugars, for decorating

① Whisk together flour, baking powder, and salt in a bowl; set aside. In a mixer fitted with a paddle, beat together sugar, butter, and vanilla until fluffy. Add eggs one at a time; beat. Add dry ingredients; mix. Transfer dough to a floured surface; divide into 4 pieces. Shape each piece into a flat disk; wrap each disk in plastic; chill 1 hour.

② Heat oven to 325°. Working with 1 disk at a time, roll to 1/8" thickness on a floured surface. Using various large cookie cutters, cut out shapes and place on parchment paper-lined baking sheets, spacing cookies 2" apart. Reroll and cut scraps. Bake until lightly browned, 12-15 minutes. Let cool. Decorate with royal icing, sprinkles, and sugars.

#### CARAMEL CRUMB BARS

MAKES 32

- 20 tbsp. unsalted butter, softened, plus more
- 2 1/2 cups flour, plus more for pan
- 1/2 cup sugar
- 1 tsp. vanilla extract
- 1/4 tsp. kosher salt
- 1/4 cup packed dark brown sugar
- 1 tbsp. light corn syrup
- 1 14-oz. can sweetened condensed milk

Heat oven to 350°. Line a 9" x 13" baking sheet with parchment paper; grease and flour. In a mixer fitted with a paddle, beat together 16 tbsp. butter, sugar, vanilla, and salt until fluffy. Add 2 1/4 cups flour; mix.

Transfer 3/4 dough to pan; press into bottom; chill. Rub remaining dough and flour into large crumbles; set aside. Combine remaining butter, brown sugar, syrup, and milk in a 2-qt. saucepan. Cook, stirring, over medium-high heat to make caramel, 8-10 minutes. Pour over dough; scatter crumbles over top. Bake until golden, 25-30 minutes. Let cool. Cut into bars.

#### BASLER BRUNSLI

(Chocolate-Almond Spice Cookies)

MAKES ABOUT 4 DOZEN

- 8 oz. whole blanched almonds
- 1 1/2 cups sugar, plus more for rolling
- 6 oz. semisweet chocolate, finely chopped
- 1 1/2 tsp. ground cinnamon
- 1/2 tsp. ground cloves
- 2 egg whites, lightly beaten

Finely grind almonds and sugar in a food processor. Add chocolate; pulse until finely ground. Add cinnamon, cloves, and egg whites; pulse to make a dough. Sprinkle a large piece of parchment paper with sugar; transfer dough to paper. Lay another piece of paper over dough; roll dough to 1/8" thickness. Cut out cookies with star-shaped cutters; transfer to parchment paper-lined baking sheets, spacing cookies 1" apart. Reroll scraps and repeat. Let dough dry for 3 hours. Heat oven to 300°. Bake until cookies are slightly puffed, 12-15 minutes. Let cool.

#### ALFAJORES

(Dulce de Leche Cookie Sandwiches)

MAKES 20

- 1 2/3 cups cornstarch
- 1 1/4 cups flour
- 1 tsp. baking powder
- 2/3 cup sugar
- 10 tbsp. unsalted butter, softened
- 1 tbsp. cognac or brandy
- 1/2 tsp. lemon zest
- 4 egg yolks
- Canned dulce de leche, for filling cookies

Heat oven to 350°. In a bowl, sift together cornstarch, flour, and baking powder; set aside. In a mixer fitted with a paddle, beat together sugar and butter until fluffy. Add cognac and zest; beat. Add yolks one at a time; beat. Add dry ingredients; mix. Transfer dough to a floured surface, knead briefly; divide into 3 pieces. Working with 1 dough piece at a time, roll dough to 1/4" thickness. Using a 2 1/2" round cookie cutter, cut out cookies; transfer to parchment paper-lined baking sheets, spaced 1" apart. Reroll scraps and repeat. Bake until golden, 12-15 minutes. Let cool. Flip half the cookies over; top each with 1 heaping tsp. dulce de leche. Top with remaining cookies.



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# THE PANTRY

## A Guide to Resources

*In producing the stories for this issue, we discovered ingredients and information too good to keep to ourselves. Please feel free to raid our pantry!*

BY BEN MIMS

### Fare

To try Yong Kang's Taiwanese beef noodles, visit **Yong Kang Beef Noodle shop** (No. 17, Lane 31, Sec. 2, Jinshan South Road, Da-an District, Taipei,



Left to right: a Villaware electric *krumkake* maker and molding cone; pastry chef Nick Malgieri's vintage *speculaas* mold.

Taiwan; 866/2/2351-1051; beefnoodle master.com). To make the Taiwanese beef noodle soup (see page 18), buy **Chinese rice wine** (\$6.99 for a 25-ounce bottle) and **dark soy sauce** (\$6.99 for a 17-ounce bottle), available from Ethnic Foods Co. (866/331-7684; store.ethnicfoodsco.com), **Chinese black vinegar**, available from We R Gourmet Foods (\$4.95 for a 20.3-ounce bottle; 888/366-3430; wergourmetfoods.com), and Chinese pickled mustard greens (look for preserved mustard greens), available from Indian Foods Company

(\$3.99 for an 8-ounce package; 866/331-7684; store.indianfoodsco.com). To order **fruitcake**, go to claxtonfruitcake.com. To order the **Blanc de Blancs 2006**, contact Gruet Winery (\$25 for a 750-milliliter bottle; 505/821-0055; gruetwinery.com).

### Drink

For more information on where to purchase **schnaps**, contact the following companies: (Unless stated otherwise, suggested retail prices are for 375-milliliter bottles.) For the **Clear Creek Distillery Kirschwasser** (\$28) and **Williams Pear Brandy** (\$25), contact the distillery (503/248-9470; clearcreekdistillery.com); for the **Gölles Wild Plum** (\$60), **Cherry** (\$65), **Old Apple Barrel-Aged** (\$50), and **Apricot schnaps** (\$65), contact Winebow (201/445-0620; info@winebow.com); for **St. George Spirits Aqua Perfecta Framboise Eau-de-Vie** (\$40) and **Aqua Perfecta Basil Eau-de-Vie** (\$40), contact the distillery (510/769-1601; stgeorgespirits.com); for the **Reisetbauer Carrot** (\$76), **Ginger** (\$132), **Raspberry** (\$132), and **Williams Pear Schnaps** (\$72), contact Michael Skurnik Wines (516/677-9300); for **Warwick Valley's American Fruits Pear Eau-de-Vie**, contact the distillery (\$29; 845/258-6020; wwwinery.com); and for **Westford Hill Framboise**, contact the distillery (\$29; 860/429-0464; westfordhill.com).

### Classic

To make the fondue with sparkling wine (see page 60), purchase **Vacherin Fribourgeois** (\$36 for 1 pound) or **Appenzeller** (\$37 for 1 pound), available from Artisanal Premium Cheese (877/797-1200; artisanalcheese.com).

To order our favorite fondue pots, contact the following sources: Etsy, Inc. (etsy.com), eBay (ebay.com), Amazon (amazon.com), and Ruby Lane (415/362-7611; rubylane.com) for the **Landert caquelon 9-piece fondue set**, a **Dansk fondue pot and set**, a **Cathrineholm fondue set**, and an **Oster electric fondue pot** (prices for all vary by seller); Target for the **Swissmar Fest Chocolate Fondue Set** (\$28; target.com; 800/591-3869); and Sur La Table (800/243-0852; surlatable.com) for the **All-Clad Stainless-Steel Fondue Pot with Ceramic Insert** (\$149.95), the **Le Creuset Fondue Pot** (\$159.95), the **Cuisinart Electric Fondue Pot** (\$59.95), the **Emile Henry Flame-Top Fondue Pot** (\$119.95), and the **Sur La Table Stainless-Steel Fondue Pot** (\$69.96).

### Sweetness and Light

To make the Armenian nutmeg cake (see page 82), purchase a **cake stencil**, available from New York Cake & Baking Distributors (prices vary by design and size) in New York City (56 West 22nd Street; 212/675-2253) or Los Angeles (10665 West Pico Boulevard; 310/481-0875) or order from its website, nycake.com. To make the Cayo Romano cocktail (see page 82), purchase **allspice "pimento" dram**, available from Barisol Liquor & Wine (\$29.99 for a 750-milliliter bottle; 800/658-8149; drinkupny.com).

### Roots of the Deli

For **private tours of Jewish heritage** in Bucharest, and throughout Romania, contact Fernando Klabin (\$170 per day; 40/74/289-7832; fernandokla@gmail.com). For more information on **traveling in Romania**, contact the Romanian National Tourist Office (romaniatourism.com). For more information on **traveling in Hungary**, contact the Hungarian National Tourist

Office (gotohungary.com).

### Roast Pork Rules

To make the roast pork with crisp crackling (see page 112), use **Chinese rose cooking wine**, available from eFood Depot.com (\$2.69 for a 500-milliliter bottle; 866/256-9210; efooddepot.com) and **preserved red bean curd**, available at Asian grocery stores.

### Eat, Drink, and Be Merry

To prepare the butter chicken (see page 118), purchase **fresh curry leaves**, available from iShopIndian.com (\$2.25 for a 0.75-ounce bag; 877/786-8876; ishopindian.com). To make the decadent trifle (see page 120), use **Lyle's Golden Syrup**, available from iGourmet (\$7.99 for a 10.6-ounce tin; 877/446-8763; igourmet.com).

### Kitchen

To make the *krumkakes* (see page 130), purchase an **electric krumkake maker and cone** (pictured) from Nordic Delicacies (\$59; 718/748-1874; nordicdeli.com). To make the *speculaas* cookies (see page 130), buy **wooden speculaas molds** (pictured), available from Hobi Cookie Molds (\$16–\$35 for various designs and sizes; cookiemold.com) or resin molds from House on the Hill, Inc. (\$24–\$59 for various designs and sizes; 877/279-4455; houseonthehill.net). To purchase snowflake, Christmas tree, or other **cookie cutters and baking supplies**, including dragées, sanding sugars, and royal icing, visit New York Cake & Baking Distributors (see above).

### Corrections

In our June/July 2010 issue: On page 102, the labeling for item 5 (*gai lan*) and item 6 (*choy sum*) should be reversed. On page 22, the official opening day of Essex Street Market was January 10, 1940.

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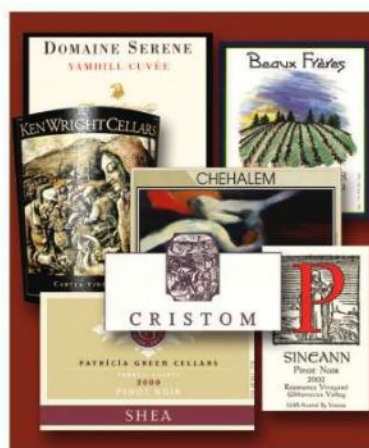
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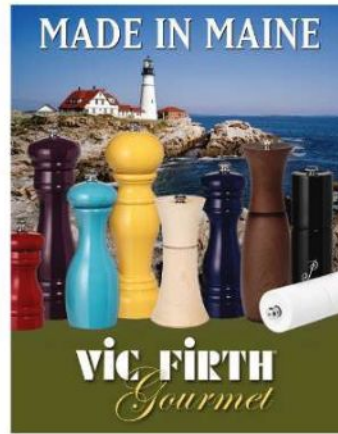


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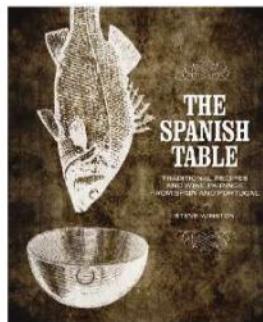


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# MOMENT

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**TIME** late 1800s

**PLACE** Kishinev, Russian Empire (now Moldova)

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